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Entertainment WEEKLY

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

# Spider-Man

How STAN LEE Created PETER PARKER

*Exclusive*

## TOM HOLLAND TALKS *NO WAY HOME*

+

## VENOM VS. DOC OCK

*Who's the Biggest Bad?*

Entertainment WEEKLY
COLLECTOR'S EDITION
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
SPIDER-MAN

# CONTENTS


**4**
**Along Came a Spider-Man**
He's the teen superhero for people who love superheroes, a regular guy who saves the city but struggles to pay rent

**PART ONE**
**PRESENTING PETER PARKER**

**10**
***Spider-Man: No Way Home***
Inside the sixth big-screen outing for the MCU's wise-cracking webslinger

**14**
**Tom Holland Tells All**
The boyish Brit reflects on his heroic tenure in tights—and discusses what comes next

**20**
**A Hero Comes Home**
Sony and Marvel agreed to share custody of Spider-Man—and Hollywood magic was made

**28**
***Spider-Man: Homecoming*'s Big Twist**
Director Jon Watts breaks down *that* terrifying scene

**30**
**Back to School**
Behind the scenes of Holland's charming trilogy

**36**
**The Origin Story**
Stan Lee explained in this 2002 interview why Peter Parker was his favorite

**40**
**The Ultimate Timeline**
Spider-Man has been cloned, resurrected, impersonated and married. We trace his delightfully tangled web

**50**
**Spider-Man's Greatest Hits**
From his earworm theme song to a Broadway show, the character's musical history is extensive

**52**
**Spidey Goes to Hollywood**
Inside director Sam Raimi and Tobey Maguire's breakout webslinging trilogy

**58**
**Playing It Cool**
New open-world videogames that let players swing through the sky and save the world

**62**
**Swing Shift**
How Brit Andrew Garfield swooped in for a pair of blockbusters powered by indie director Marc Webb

**68**
**Giving Voice to Spider-Man**
Dozens of actors have voiced Spidey in animation, live action and videogames

**PART TWO**
**INTO THE MULTIVERSE**

**74**
**Winning by a Miles**
The animated *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* introduced the Afro-Latino teen to moviegoers everywhere—and won an Oscar

**80**
**The Spider-Family**
These interdimensional heroes gear up to—what else?—save the world

**84**
**The Big Bads**
We rank every Spidey foe who has chewed the scenery duking it out with the friendly neighborhood hero

**92**
**What Will Happen Next?**
Sony plans to roll out a host of new Spidey projects

**96**
**Some Friendly Neighborhood Sound Bites**
Spidey's a master of the quick quip both in and out of battle

Tom Holland as Peter Parker in 2018's *Avengers: Infinity War.*

FOREWORD

# Along Came a Spider-Man

He's a regular guy who saves the city but always struggles to pay the rent. This superhero's brilliant secret is that he is his own greatest creation: a boy pretending to be a (spider)-man. **BY DOUGLAS WOLK**

**"I WAS BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE** spider," Peter Parker announces at the beginning of the 2018 movie *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. "I'm pretty sure you know the rest." He's right about that. The origin of Spider-Man is a story so universally familiar that the Marvel Cinematic Universe movies in which Tom Holland plays him, from 2016's *Captain America: Civil War* to the new *Spider-Man: No Way Home,* don't even bother to recap it—they can safely assume that their audience knows it already.

The essential elements of that origin story were first laid out by writer Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko in an 11-page story in the 1962 comic book *Amazing Fantasy* #15: the lonely, nerdy high school kid, raised by his aunt and uncle; the super-science-augmented bug bite; the amazing powers he never asked for; the flash of arrogance; the uncle's murder; the devastated boy's realization that, along with his newfound power, he's gained a responsibility he never wanted but accepts anyway. Thousands of Spider-Man stories have sprung from that one indelible fable—almost 60 years' worth of comic books, movies, TV shows, video games, a Broadway musical and more.

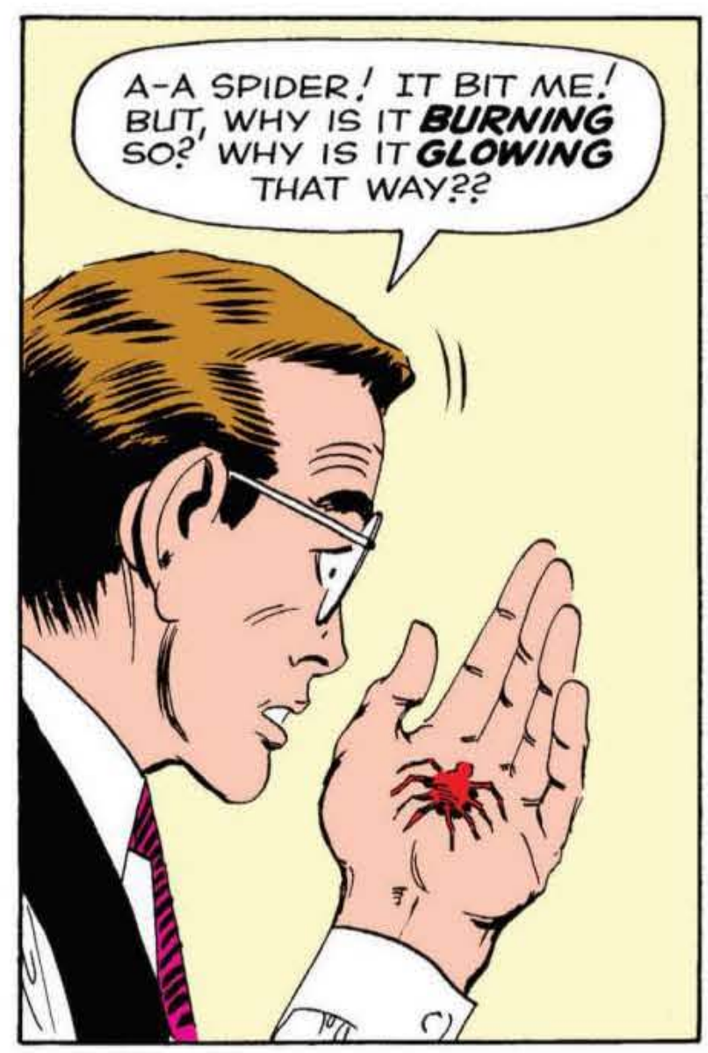
Lee and Ditko didn't conceive of Spider-Man as a film character. Nobody imagined, in the early '60s, that movie studios would be particularly interested in comic books as source material, especially comics as weird and jagged as *The Amazing Spider-Man*. But he turned out to be a natural for movies, especially as special-effects technology began to catch up with the impossible body language Ditko and later artists invented for him. By contemporary standards, Nicholas Hammond's Spidey in the 1977-79 *Amazing Spider-Man* TV show looks like a guy in a Halloween costume, but by the time Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* (with Tobey Maguire as Peter) appeared in 2002, the wall-crawler had become convincingly uncanny on the screen.

Raimi also, brilliantly, returned to the idea of Peter Parker as a scrawny high school kid. The first lightning-bolt moment of Ditko and Lee's original story is its opening page: young Peter Parker standing sullenly to the side, the silhouette of a spiderweb behind him, as the popular kids in his school mock him. Almost every time there's a new version of Spider-Man—not just in Raimi's trilogy but in Marc Webb's two *The Amazing Spider-Man* films with Andrew Garfield, in the MCU movies with Holland and in many of the character's animated incarnations—it focuses on Peter Parker as a teenager, because that's the version of the character that has the most dramatic possibilities. (That also means that one actor after another has aged out of the role.)

The Spider-Man story is a coming-of-age story. It's about a boy who lost his parents long ago, who feels alienated from everyone

→ Spider-Man's first appearance, in 1962 (minus the hyphen in his name).

↓ Peter Parker's fateful spider bite.



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THOUGH THE WORLD MAY MOCK PETER PARKER, THE TIMID TEEN-AGER...
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...IT WILL SOON MARVEL AT THE AWESOME MIGHT OF... SPIDER-MAN!
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO YOU, FROM THE EDITOR--ABOUT THE NEW AMAZING!

around him and who loses his second father through his own disastrous error. He can't be a child anymore after that, so the central question of his story is how he can grow up to be a man. Peter Parker tries to clear his conscience by living a double life, which never stops backfiring on him; nearly everyone who cares for one of his identities despises the other one.

He's not glamorous or wealthy or even particularly solvent—which makes him much easier to identify with, in some ways, than Bruce Wayne or Tony Stark or T'Challa. His enemies, as grotesque as they are, are also usually potential father figures for him, or examples of what he might aspire to become: a showman like Mysterio or Kraven the Hunter, a scientist like Doctor Octopus or the Lizard, an industrialist like the Green Goblin. Some of his allies are surrogate father figures as well—look at the way Holland's Spider-Man worshipfully addresses "Mr. Stark."

For all his angst and longing and survivor's guilt, though, Spider-Man stories can be exquisitely playful and lighthearted. When he's got his costume on, Peter Parker may be in perpetual danger, but he's free: a wisecracking acrobat, swinging through the city. He's funny, and fun to watch in action; he plays off more serious characters nicely. As he starts to gain confidence out of costume too, his story becomes, in part, a romantic comedy. (In the '60s, that had a lot to do with the presence of artist John Romita, a romance-comics veteran who took over *Amazing Spider-Man* after Ditko left in 1966.)

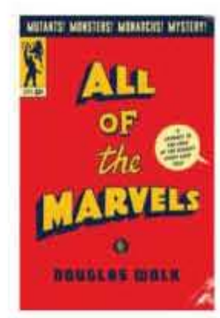
Peter's been a college graduate for more than 40 years' worth of comic books. He's been an increasingly successful photojournalist, occasionally a teacher, sometimes a research scientist, briefly a technology magnate. He was happily married for a while and has tried giving up the superhero life more than a few times—the most famous Spider-Man image Romita drew is of Peter Parker walking away from a trash can where he's abandoned his costume. But again and again the adult life he's built comes crashing down. He can't escape for long from being a lot like the mess he was in high school. (Often it's his own unshakable, traumatized sense of responsibility that leads him to destroy the success he's earned.)

There's a scene that Ditko drew back in in 1966's *Amazing Spider-Man* #33 that's kept reappearing ever since then in Spider-Man stories. Peter Parker is trapped beneath a mass that's vastly heavier than he imagines he could lift and thinks about surrendering to his fate—but someone he loves is depending on him, so he summons the strength to free himself anyway. (One variation on that scene shows up in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*—"C'mon, Spider-Man!" he tells himself as he struggles. There's even a quick allusion to it in the PlayStation game Marvel's Spider-Man.) That's who he is, and that's why we care about him: At his core he's the terrified, trapped kid who's coming to realize that even though his responsibility is crushing, he really does have the power to live up to it.

**EVEN THOUGH HIS RESPONSIBILITY IS CRUSHING, HE REALLY DOES HAVE THE POWER TO LIVE UP TO IT"**

↑ Tom Holland's teenage Peter Parker.

→ Steve Ditko's *Amazing Spider-Man* #33.




*Douglas Wolk is the author of* All of the Marvels: A Journey to the Ends of the Biggest Story Ever Told *(Penguin Press).*

AND THEN--AS THE AGONIZING ACHE IN HIS LIMBS SEEMS UNENDURABLE--AS HIS SUPERBLY MUSCLED BODY SUFFERS THE TORMENT OF A VIRTUALLY INDESCRIBABLE ORDEAL--FROM OUT OF THE PAIN--FROM OUT OF THE AGONY--COMES TRIUMPH!
I DID IT! I'M FREE!
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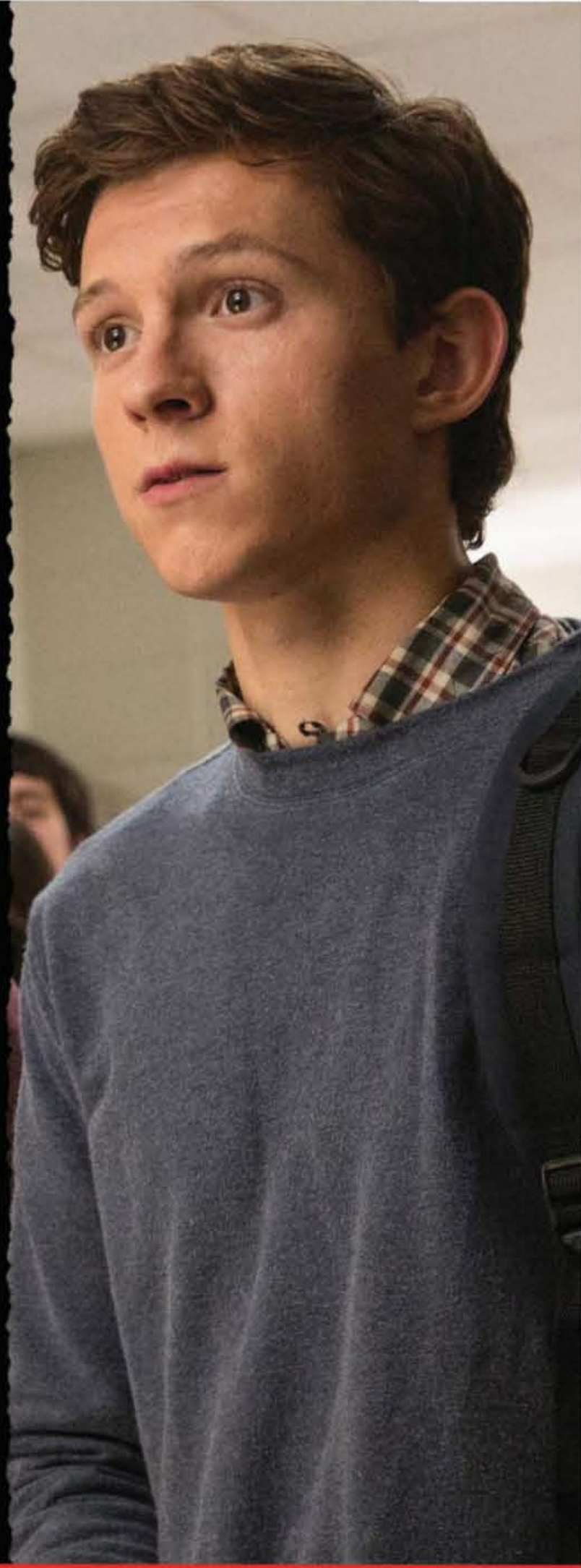
PART ONE

# PRESENTING P



# ETER PARKER

FILM PREVIEW

# Spider-Man: No Way Home

Tom Holland takes to the sky in his sixth outing as everyone's favorite wisecracking webslinger on December 17, 2021. **BY DEVAN COGGAN**

**TOM HOLLAND MADE A NEW FRIEND** on the set of *Spider-Man: No Way Home*—or is that an old enemy?

The 25-year-old actor suited up again for his third solo Spidey film, this one picking up immediately after Peter Parker's secret identity went public courtesy of Jake Gyllenhaal's Mysterio in 2019's European-set *Spider-Man: Far From Home*.

As Peter scrambles to take control of his life, he finds himself facing off against familiar foes—including Alfred Molina's Otto Octavius, aka Doc Ock, reprising his eight-armed role from 2004's *Spider-Man 2,* which featured Tobey Maguire in the Spidey suit.

Holland, who didn't start slinging webs until being cast as Peter in 2015, couldn't help but geek out over the veteran Molina, calling him "one of my favorite people I've ever worked with."

"It was really fun to watch him see how technology has advanced," Holland adds. "When he was [originally] making these films, the arms were puppets, and when we did it, they're all imaginary and CG. It was quite cool to see him relive it but also relearn it."

That mix of past and present is key to *No Way Home,* which Holland refers to as the "conclusion" to his trilogy of Spidey movies. For Holland, the film serves as an opportunity to pay tribute to previous iterations of the character while also taking his Peter in a new direction. "The first film, [director] Jon Watts and I were sort of flying by the seat of our pants," Holland says. "This one, I think we both felt really confident, so we were able to relax."

In *No Way Home,* Peter is having a hard time trying to juggle his newfound infamy, schoolwork and his burgeoning relationship with MJ (Zendaya), so he turns to Benedict Cumberbatch's Doctor Strange for a magical fix. Although the Sorcerer Supreme is only too happy to oblige his young pal, in doing so he inadvertently triggers a cascade of universe-threatening problems—bending the time-space continuum and leading to some unexpected encounters.

Adding mystical portals and multiverses to Spider-Man's down-to-earth world allowed Holland and Watts to get more inventive than ever. Holland says that the film's fight scenes are "a lot more visceral," with "a lot more hand-to-hand combat."

It also came with some new mystical entanglements, but that was fine with Holland. "If you're not willing to focus and do the prep work, you're going to get called out," he says with a laugh. "Because when you're dealing with magic spells and dimensions, it *really* gets complicated."

No kidding.

→ MJ (Zendaya) takes a leap of faith with Peter (Tom Holland) as Spider-Man.

## Back in Action

"What we've been working on this past year is pretty special," says Tom Holland. "There were days where the crew couldn't even believe what they were seeing. I'm excited as a fan."

## ← Super Friends

"I love those guys so much—they're family to me," says Holland about Zendaya and Jacob Batalon (right). The last day they filmed together "was maybe the best day I've ever had on-set. I haven't cried like that, I don't think, ever. It was the perfect way to finish."

## ↓ Making a Scene

Peter stands by while Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) conjures some major magic at his request—casting a spell that will make everyone in the world forget that Peter is Spider-Man. But his well-intentioned actions have serious cosmic ramifications.

Q&A

# Tom Holland Tells All

*Spider-Man: No Way Home* marks the culmination of the boyish Brit's amazing turn as Peter Parker. Here the actor reflects on his heroic tenure—and what comes next. **BY DEVAN COGGAN**

**FIVE YEARS AGO, SPIDER-MAN MET** the Avengers in *Captain America: Civil War,* and everything changed for the webslinger—and for his then-19-year-old real-world alter ego, Tom Holland. "This has truly been a dream come true," he said at the time. "It's not only met my expectations but exceeded them."

Holland exceeded ours too. After being plucked from thousands of hopefuls, the young Brit threatened to steal all the scenes he appeared in *Civil War.* He imbued every moment with pure giddiness, bringing that same winning teen spirit with him any time he's donned the Spidey suit.

He's also tapped into Peter's pain. During the finale of 2019's *Avengers: Endgame,* he watches mentor Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) sacrifice himself to save the world and is left reeling. His grief over that loss leads Peter to make some reckless choices in 2019's *Spider-Man: Far From Home.* "We live in a climate where there are so many superhero movies every year, so it's nice to have one about a 16-year-old kid who's given these responsibilities that mostly only grown-ups have and see how he deals with it."

Now, with follow-up *Spider-Man: No Way Home,* Peter's poised to make even more important choices, as is Holland—namely, whether he will continue on with the role now that his first trilogy of solo adventures has come to a close. "I'll do 26 of these movies if they ask me," he once told *EW.* "I get to travel the world, I get to play a character that I've grown up loving my whole life." Fingers crossed he's asked.

← Just your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man.

→ Tom Holland in 2019.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JUCO

**You've been playing this role for five years. Do you feel like your performance or your relationship to these movies has changed?**
**TOM HOLLAND** I'm still kind of in that pinch-me moment. The novelty of playing this character and being in these films definitely hasn't worn off. When I'm standing in front of Benedict Cumberbatch and some of these other actors I'm getting the chance to work with, it's still an incredible thing. I still feel like the kid from London who got a lucky break.

**What is Peter's mindset in this movie, post-*Far From Home*?**
[This] is something that Peter has never experienced before. He's the most famous person in the world, but for the wrong reasons. The whole world thinks that he blew up the London Bridge. He's trying to navigate a life of fame, while also trying to get into college, trying to maintain a relationship with his friends [and] with his girlfriend. It's just a really interesting dynamic to throw at a 16-year-old superhero.

**What has been your biggest challenge on this film?**
Navigating the character arc. There are two story lines going at the same time for my character, and they're very conflicting. Trying to figure out where I was and at what time and what emotion was really difficult. It just required a lot of focus, a lot of prep work and also a lot of trust in [director] Jon [Watts]. Sometimes you can get a bit complacent and think, "I've done this five times. I know what I'm doing." But it's different. You have to focus.

**Is there something you and Jon Watts have always wanted to try that you finally get to do here?**
There are some sides to Peter Parker that we always wanted to explore, but we never could [before]. In this film, we definitely dive into the deep end. The arc definitely comes to an incredible conclusion. It's been awesome.

**Tell me a little bit about working with Benedict Cumberbatch.**
Working with Benedict is always a joy. He's such a nice guy, and we're such good mates. There's something quite nice about two guys from London working in America, playing two guys from New York. [*Laughs*] We get on quite well. The dynamic between Peter and Doctor Strange is quite interesting. You know, I go to him for help, and surprisingly, he's really eager to help me, and it all goes horribly wrong. Things happen, and it all gets a bit exciting. But working with Benedict was a joy, and it was interesting to start playing in the magic world with Peter Parker.

**It was also so exciting to see Alfred Molina pop up in the trailer.**
It was such a joy to get to work with him, to hear his stories about his experiences in the superhero world, to then kind of restart the fire and bring him back. Doc Ock has always been one of my favorite villains as a kid growing up, so to get to share the screen with him was so exciting.... He's a London lad, so we have a lot in common when it comes to that sort of stuff. I really hope we get to do it again.

**You've talked about growing up as a fan of those earlier incarnations of Spider-Man. What has it been like for you working on this film that brings back some of those characters?**
It's incredibly exciting, and it's a real honor to pay homage to

↗ **Clockwise from top** Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) and Spider-Man; Alfred Molina's Doc Ock; director Jon Watts and Holland.

## WE'VE BEEN MAKING THESE FILMS FOR FIVE YEARS NOW . . . WITH EACH OTHER EVERY STEP OF THE WAY"

—TOM HOLLAND

those earlier films and pay our respects. We've been so lucky that Tobey and Andrew sort of jump-started this character and turned it into this incredible success, and Jon Watts and I have been so lucky to take it on and do our own thing with it.

**Tell me what Jon Watts has brought to this franchise.**
Sometimes when you watch films, especially if you know the director, you can see their sense of humor living in the film. I think what he brings to this franchise is his ability to tell a story, his ability to keep heart in the story, his ability to make people laugh. And it is him. The film is him. His sense of humor is exactly how these films play out. His knowledge of storytelling has been so instrumental. He's incredibly creative when it comes to the CGI aspects of the film. It's nice to see him progress as a director, in the same way I'm sure he's seen me progress as an actor over the course of these three films. It takes away some of the risk, you know? You go to work every day feeling confident because I can trust him, and he can trust me. There's this one scene in the film.... There was something about it that wasn't working for me. Jon was giving me notes, and it just wasn't working. I said, "You and me, let's go to my trailer and sit down and talk about this." So we sat down at the end of the day, worked on it after work, and the next morning we reshot it. It worked, and it's fantastic, and I'm very proud of it. To be able to have that kind of relationship with him and the confidence to say, "this isn't working, I think we need to rewrite it," is such a luxury. Because it means that every single day you're putting your best foot forward.

**Are there any other filming days that are memorable for you?**
There's one in particular with Jacob and Zendaya. We've been making these films for five years now. We've had such an amazing relationship, the three of us. We've been with each other every step of the way. We've done every single film, every single press tour. So this one scene, [we didn't know] if this would be the last time [we were all working together.] [It] was heartbreaking but also really exciting because we're all moving into the next chapter of our careers.

**Are you treating this film as a finale? Is this your last time out as Peter Parker?**
I think we were all treating it as the end of a franchise. If we were lucky enough to dive into these characters again, it would no longer be the Homecoming trilogy. I think we would give it some time and try to build something different and tonally change the films. We just have to wait and see.

→ The cast of *Spider-Man: Homecoming* in 2016. From left: Zendaya, Laura Harrier, Jacob Batalon, Holland and Tony Revolori.

Tom Holland as Peter Parker in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.

# A HERO COMES HOME

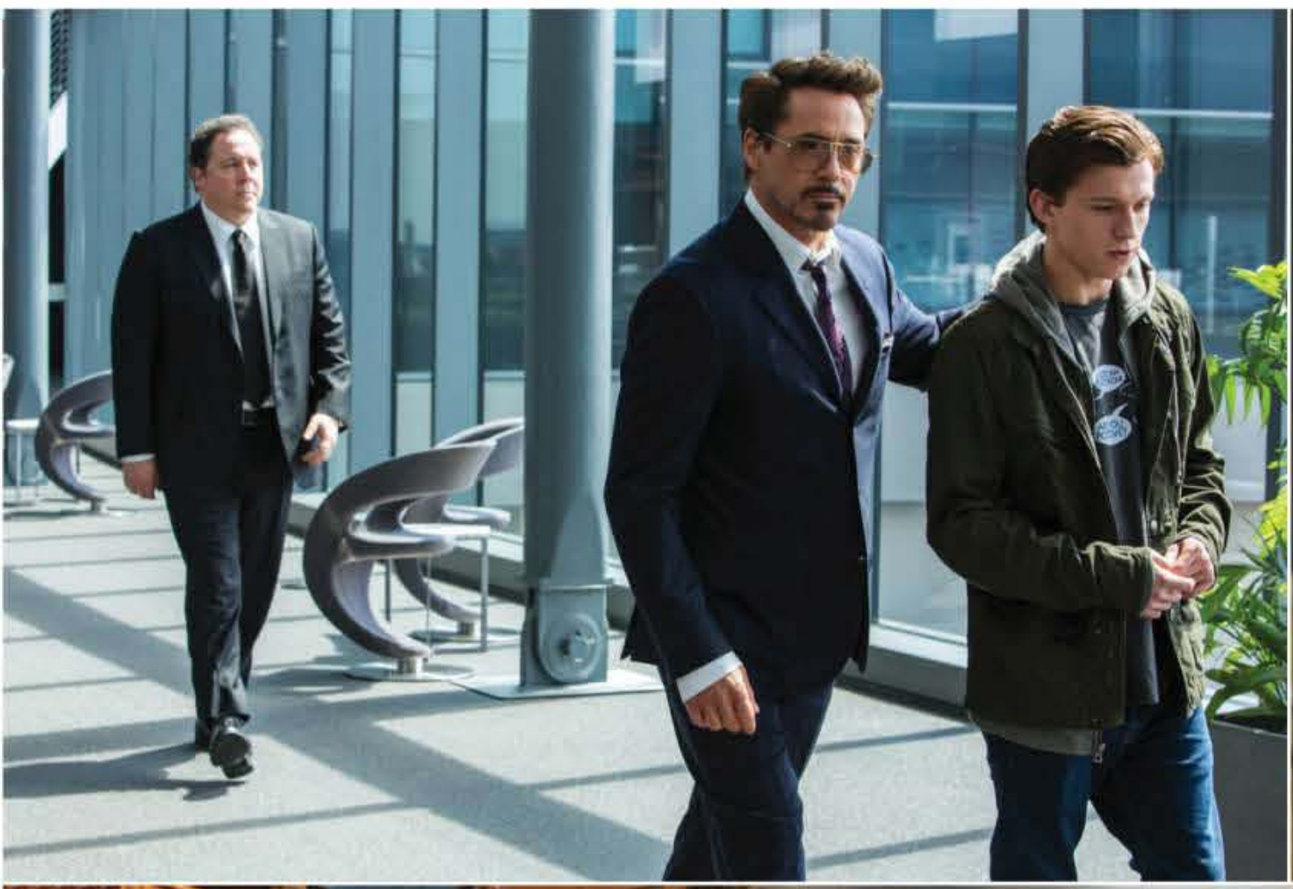
Once Sony and Marvel agreed to share custody of Spider-Man, charming young Brit **TOM HOLLAND** swooped in with the skills of an acrobat and transformed into the teen from Queens, easily making the role his own.

**BY REBECCA ASCHER-WALSH**

**SOMETIMES PERSISTENCE CAN BE AS IMPORTANT AS PERFORMANCE. WHEN, IN** 2015, Tom Holland heard about the search to cast the next Spider-Man, the British actor booked his plane tickets. Many, many plane tickets. Over the course of seven months he flew to Ireland, Canada and Belgium, taping a total of six auditions for *Captain America: Civil War,* which would be the first Marvel movie to incorporate the character. He traveled to L.A. to read for the casting director, went to Atlanta to test with Robert Downey Jr. and returned home to England only to circle back to Atlanta six weeks later to audition with Chris Evans.

There he decided to pull out all the stops. Putting his gymnastic and dance training to the test, the former star of London's West End musical production *Billy Elliot* offered to perform a Spider-Man-like flip. "Obviously if there is a time to show off, now is the time," Holland said. According to Evans, he met with some pushback, although only briefly. "Marvel doesn't want to see this kid break his neck, so everyone . . . was like, 'Don't!,' " Evans remembered, but codirector Joe Russo, "started salivating—'Just do it!' " Holland stuck the landing and snagged the part—a fact he learned on Instagram before getting a call from Marvel president Kevin Feige that he should appear on-set only days later.

When Tobey Maguire kicked off the big-screen franchise in 2002, he had



been contractually committed to only two films. This time around, Sony and Marvel Studios—which share rights to the onscreen character—weren't taking any chances with their new golden boy, who had beaten out actors like Timothée Chalamet (*Call Me by Your Name*) and Asa Butterfield (*Sex Education*). Holland, the youngest actor to play the part at only 19 years old, was immediately signed to a six-picture deal. He would appear in three Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) productions as well as star in three stand-alone Spider-Man films.

First up was Marvel's *Captain America: Civil War,* starring Evans in his third iteration of the titular role, along with Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark/Iron Man, Scarlett Johansson as Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow, Chadwick Boseman playing T'Challa/Black Panther, Don Cheadle as Lieutenant James Rhodes/War Machine and Paul Bettany playing Vision. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo, the film explores the rift among the Avengers, with Stark taking Parker on as a protégé. When it was released in May 2016, the film earned Holland critical nods and raked in more than $1.1 billion at the box office.

↑ **Clockwise from left** Spidey (Holland) gets trapped while fighting Vulture in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*; from left, Happy Hogan (Jon Favreau) and Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) prepare to introduce Peter as the newest Avenger in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*; Michael Keaton as the Vulture; Spidey holds it together in *Homecoming*

A year later Holland stepped to center stage with *Spider-Man: Homecoming,* directed by Jon Watts (*Cop Car*). *Homecoming* picks up with Parker fresh off his Avengers adventure, navigating life back in Queens as a dorky high school sophomore and getting smacked around by bad guy Adrian Toomes, aka Vulture (Michael Keaton). Downey Jr.'s Iron Man sticks around as the first MCU character to cross over into a Spider-Man film; Zendaya is Parker's friend and future love interest M.J., Marisa Tomei plays Aunt May, and Jacob Batalon is Parker's best friend, Ned Leeds.

Filling out the cast are Jon Favreau, Gwyneth Paltrow and Donald Glover.

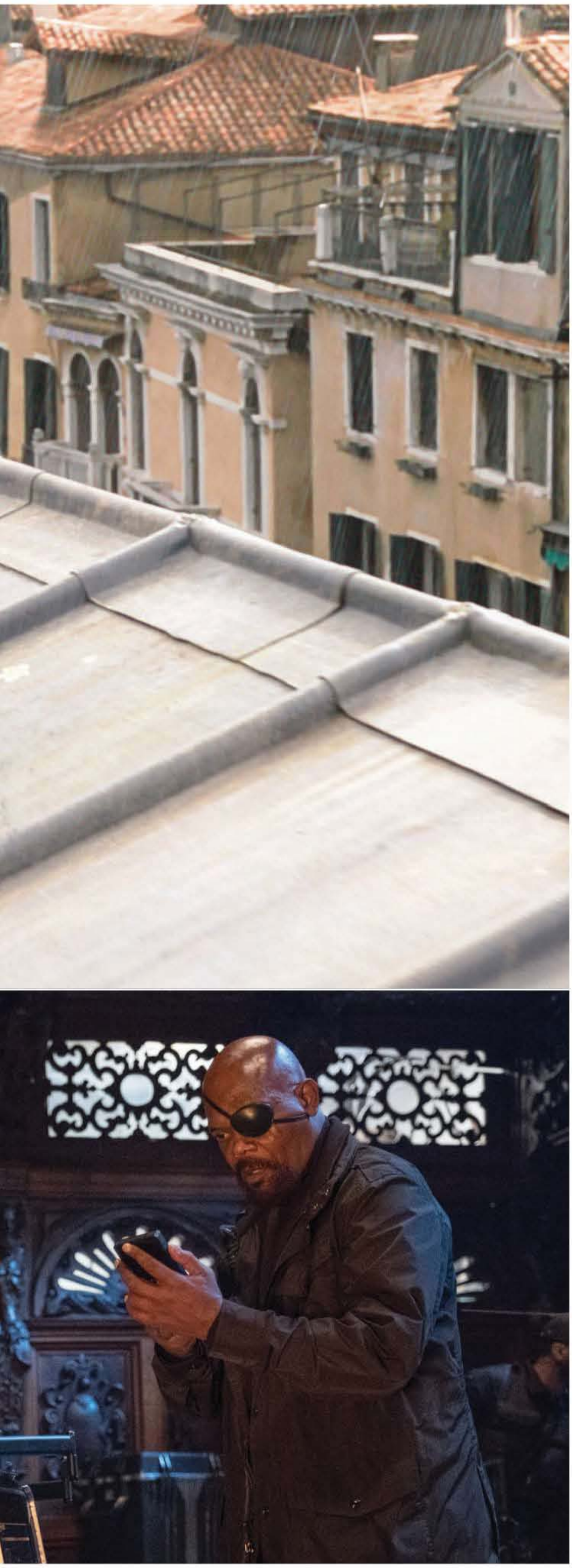
*Homecoming* shrugs off the gloom of the earlier Spider-Man films, tossing aside the somewhat more tormented Maguire/Andrew Garfield Peter Parker persona and embracing the mentality of a goofy adolescent. "Yes, there's a lot of drama and conflict," Watts said, "but more than anything, it's about 'If you were that age and could do what he can do? That would be *really* fun.'" (Watts added plenty of his own fun to the film, including having Evans, in full Captain America costume, delivering messages to the high school students about a fitness challenge.) "Basically my version of Spider-Man is the worst Spider-Man ever," Holland said of the film's lighthearted approach. "He is actually not very good at being a superhero."

The overall humor, combined with sophisticated special effects, helped Holland make a dazzling debut as a leading man, with the film earning $880 million at the box office.

Two years later the cast and crew gathered to film *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (shot partially in England, with the set quite close to Holland's house). The sequel was again directed by Watts. "I think just not screwing up the first one was enough for them to be, 'Yeah, do it again,'" he joked. Playing the ambiguous Mysterio was Jake Gyllenhaal, who had been considered as Maguire's replacement in *Spider-Man 3*. Samuel L. Jackson signed on as Nick Fury, and J.K. Simmons reprised his role as J. Jonah Jameson, who publicly outs Parker's alter ego.

The script sends Parker and his classmates off on a glamorous trip around Europe, although Peter doesn't make it past Venice before he is forced to contend with evil,

↗ **Clockwise from top** Peter Parker in *Spider-Man: Far From Home*; actor Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury; Peter shakes hands with Mysterio, played by Jake Gyllenhaal.



# A Series of Marvelous Events

NEED A REFRESHER FOR *NO WAY HOME*? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER ABOUT SPIDEY'S MCU CONNECTIONS. **BY ALYSSA SMITH**

***Captain America: Civil War*** **2016**

The airport fight between Team Cap and Team Iron Man marks the first time Holland's Spider-Man springs into action.

***Spider-Man: Homecoming*** **2017**

Peter returns to high school, waits for Tony Stark to call and takes Vulture's daughter to the homecoming dance.

***Avengers: Infinity War*** **2018**

Peter hitches a ride into space, meets Doctor Strange and the Guardians of the Galaxy, battles Thanos and fades away.

***Avengers: Endgame*** **2019**

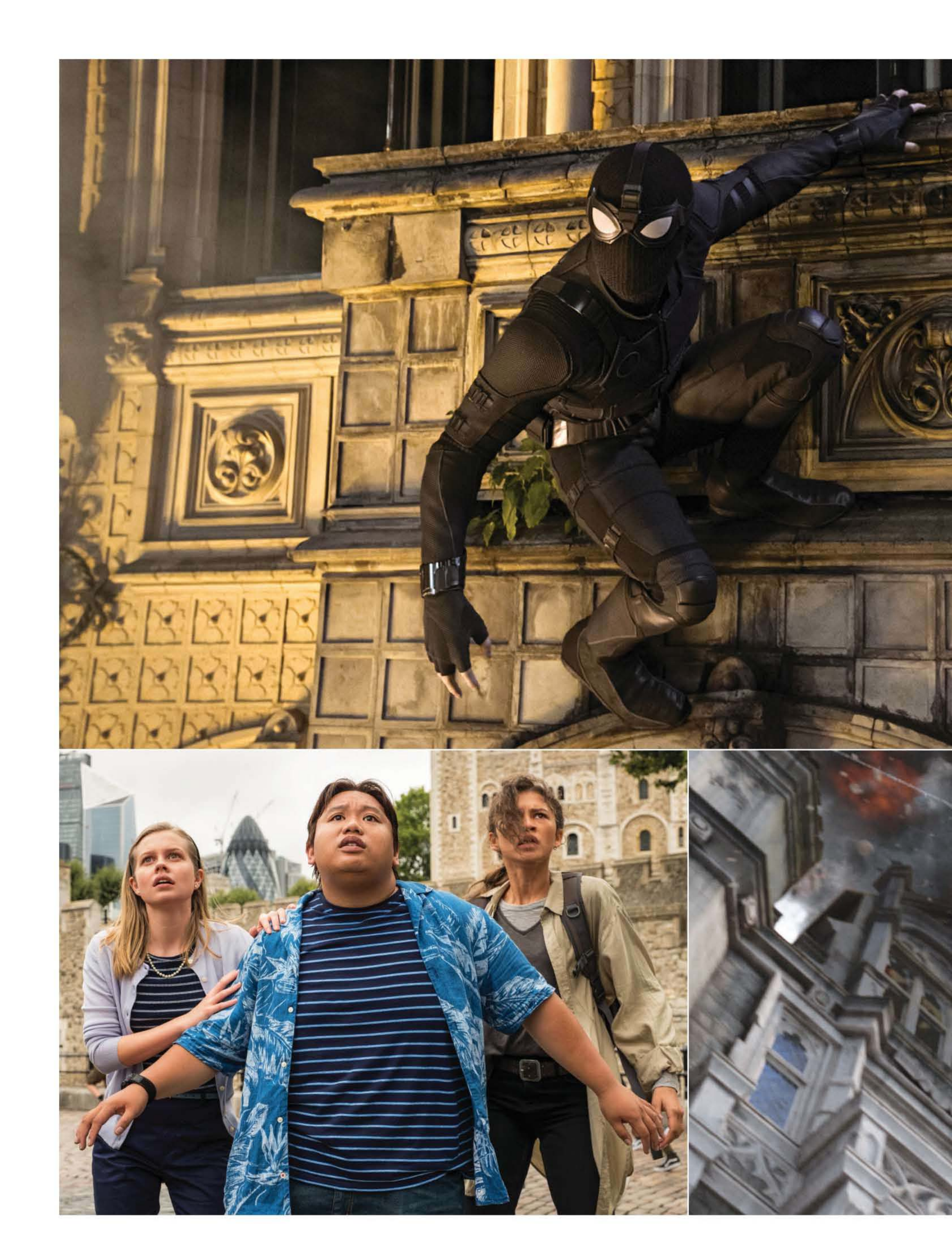
Restored from the Snap along with 50 percent of the population, Peter manages to say goodbye to Mr. Stark before the end.

***Spider-Man: Far From Home*** **2019**

Peter wrestles with his status as Tony Stark's successor and is initially fooled by Quentin Beck, aka the villain Mysterio.

***Spider-Man: No Way Home*** **2021**

Struggling with the fallout from his secret identity's having been revealed, Peter asks Doctor Strange for help. Trouble ensues.



↖ **Clockwise from top** Peter tests out his new stealth suit; swinging into action in London; friends Betty (Angourie Rice), Ned (Jacob Batalon) and MJ (Zendaya) in London.

embodied this go-round by the Elementals. These new enemies gave the filmmakers the perfect excuse to design a "stealth suit," a chic black update of the Spidey getup that would become Holland's favored costume. "It's much comfier than the spandex," Holland admitted, "and it also looks pretty badass." Released in June 2019, *Far From Home* became the highest-grossing Spider-Man movie, earning more than $1.1 billion at the box office.

While there was a two-year lag between *Homecoming* and *Far From Home*, Holland wasn't out of character for long: Between the release of the two movies, Holland joined the Marvel ensemble for 2018's *Avengers: Infinity War* and 2019's *Avengers: Endgame*. At one point it looked like the latter might be Holland's own endgame playing Spider-Man. Sony and Marvel's parent company, Disney, had a contentious relationship when it came to their financial partnership, and in 2019 they reached an impasse, briefly breaking up before reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. Said Holland at the time: "I'm just kind of like a kid . . . between two parents during an argument."

With everything smoothed over between the studios, Watts stepped behind the cameras once again in October 2020 to direct Holland in *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. The December 2021 release, in which the hero is unmasked for the first time in cinematic history, also marks the end of Holland's contracted run in the franchise. If the studios ask him to return, he has said, "I'll be there in a heartbeat. I've loved every minute of being a part of this amazing world. [But] if they don't, I will walk into the sunset a very, very happy person, because it's been an amazing journey." Spoken like a true hero.

FIVE-MINUTE ORAL HISTORY

# *Spider-Man: Homecoming's* Big Twist

Director Jon Watts breaks down the shocking reveal that caught audiences (and poor Peter Parker) by surprise. **BY SARA VILKOMERSON**

**IN 2017'S *SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING*, PETER PARKER (TOM HOLLAND)** gets a date to the dance with Liz (Laura Harrier), his high school crush. However, when he goes to her door to pick her up, he—and the audience—is stunned to realize that her father is none other than the big bad he's been fighting, the Vulture himself (Michael Keaton). Director Jon Watts takes us through how he made this movie's big surprise one of the MCU's most satisfying moments.

**How did you set about putting that twist into motion?**

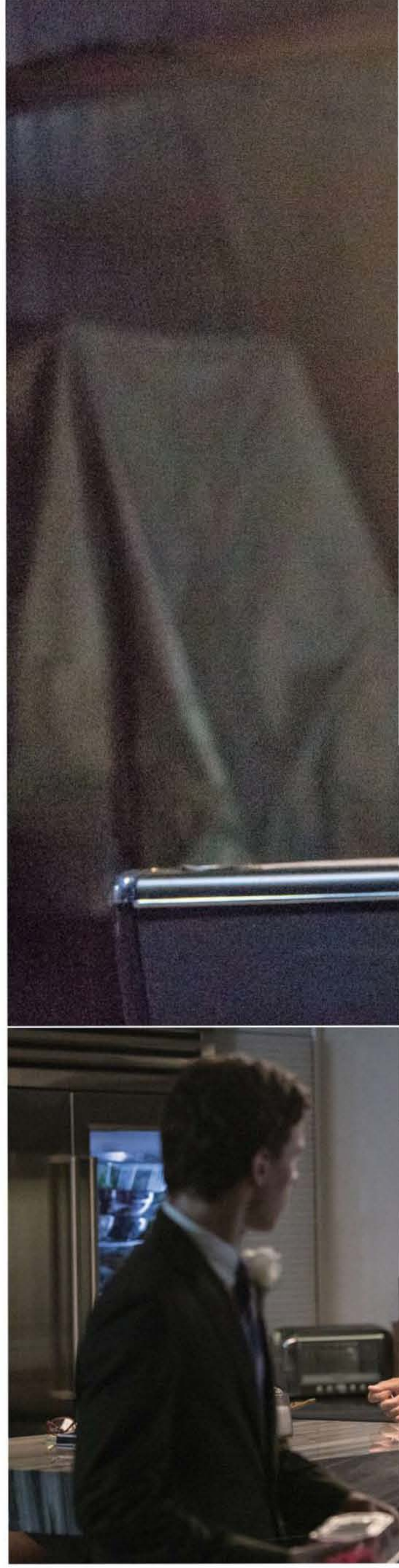
**JON WATTS** Very early on we came to the conclusion that it should be her dad. It's such a Spider-Man thing when the two worlds collide in that way. There's one issue [of the comics] where Aunt May almost marries Doc Ock. [*Laughs*] So when we were talking about what the villain plot would be and knew that we wanted it to be the Vulture, you try to come up with what might be the worst possible thing for Peter Parker. And then once you figure out that that's a key moment, it's trying to work backward and trying to work out how to get there.

**Poor Peter Parker!**

Yeah, always. His whole thing is that Parker luck. But you know, when you are 16, everything is life and death. Meeting your girlfriend's parents is as terrifying as coming face to face with a supervillain. So to have those two things happen at the same time? It's a Hitchcock moment! I think the drive to the dance is the true action climax to the movie—it's almost more intense than anything else that happens.

**The surprise—hiding the gender of the Vulture's kid and not imagining Liz as having a white father—is essential.**

You only get one big surprise in a movie…and in our test screenings only one person figured it out. This one lady was like, "It's so obvious!" The night the movie came out we drove around to different theaters where it was playing, and I just kept wanting to walk in at that moment. Seeing that door open [for the Michael Keaton reveal]. And it was great! People would genuinely gasp. It's a mousetrap—if that doesn't work, the whole thing doesn't work.



↗ **Clockwise from top** Michael Keaton's Adrian Toomes; Peter Parker (Tom Holland) and Homecoming date Liz (Laura Harrier); Toomes chats with his daughter's date.

BEHIND THE SCENES

# Back to School

With the youngest actor ever playing Peter Parker, Tom Holland's first solo films served up all the joy and angst of adolescence—alongside spectacular eye-popping action. On the set, it was a master class in how to have a rollicking good time.

### → Partners in Crime Fighting

Watts and his youthful star made for an unstoppable team on the set; both were buoyed by the limitless enthusiasm they felt toward the blockbuster project. "Jon is like, 'I'm directing the next Spider-Man, and I've only ever made one movie,' " star Holland recalled to *EW* in 2017. "And I'm like, 'Dude. I'm playing Spider-Man, and I'm 19 years old.' "

### ↓ Picture-Perfect

Tom Holland and Happy Hogan actor Jon Favreau check out director Jon Watts's handiwork with a camera on the set of *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.

## → Cultured Vulture

For Holland and Watts, working with Academy Award nominee Michael Keaton (center) as heavy Adrian Toomes (aka Vulture) was fairly intimidating. "He was terrifying," Holland says. "He basically came to set like, 'I want to be the most badass villain Marvel has ever done.' And that's what he did."

## ↓ Class Actors

Peter's outer-borough high school is populated by students who, laudably, are as diverse as they would be in a real urban school, including (from left) Zendaya's Michelle, who goes by MJ, Laura Harrier's Liz, Jacob Batalon's Ned and Tony Revolori as Peter's academic rival Flash.

## ↑ Reel Chemistry

Holland shares a laugh with Ned actor Batalon between scenes on the *Homecoming* set. In the film, Ned serves as Peter's best friend and Spidey secret keeper—he's almost as excited about Peter's alter ego as Peter is.

## ← Crush Hour

The object of Peter's affection Harrier's Liz has an intense admiration for Spider-Man—but the young couple run into trouble when Liz's dad turns out to be no other than Keaton's Vulture. Here, Watts (far right) directs the young stars.

### → Study All

To help prepare to play Peter, Holland—pictured here on the *Homecoming* set with Watts and Batalon—briefly went undercover at the Bronx High School of Science, using his acting coach's name as an alias.

### ↓ Avengers Assemble

Favreau and Holland shoot a key scene with Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark. *Homecoming* producer Amy Pascal praised Holland's poise: "Having the charisma to have the camera care that you're even a speck when you're onscreen with Robert Downey Jr. is a tall order."

## ↑ Second Time Around

Holland's second Spidey film, *Far From Home,* took him to Europe with his closest pals, including Batalon's Ned (seen here laughing with director Watts). "That vacation is hijacked by [S.H.I.E.L.D. agent] Nick Fury, and it all goes terribly wrong," Holland says.

## ← Love Is in the Air

Watts directs Zendaya and Holland on the *Far From Home* set. "The cool part is that Peter likes her for all of her quirks and the weird things she's into," Zendaya says of her MJ. Together, she and Watts took great care to make sure the wry character "never feels damsel-y."

STAN LEE

# The Origin Story

Lee created dozens of characters during his time at Marvel Comics. In 2002 he spoke to *EW*'s Anthony Breznican about why Peter Parker was his favorite.

SPIDER-MAN IS PERHAPS STAN Lee's most renowned creation, which is why it's ironic that no one initially liked his idea about the kid who becomes a webslinger after being bitten by a radioactive spider.

"I was told in chapter and verse by the fellow who was then my publisher that it was the worst idea he'd ever heard," Stan Lee said in 2002. At the time, the first Tobey Maguire webslinger movie was set to debut in just a few weeks, and Lee had filmed a cameo. "'People hate spiders! You can't call a hero Spider-Man!' publisher Martin Goodman said. 'Stan, don't you understand that teenagers can only be sidekicks?'"

Lee had stumbled onto the idea of representation—young readers of comic books might like to see a hero who looks like them. It would be a lesson that led him later to co-create the first Black superhero—the Wakandan warrior king Black Panther—as well as the first mainstream African American hero, the high-flying Falcon.

After absorbing all the Spider-Man criticism, Lee delivered more bad news to Goodman. "When I told him that I wanted Peter Parker to have a lot of problems and worries and be unsure of himself, he said, 'Ugh! It's obvious you have no conception of what a hero really is!'"

Since Lee already had a string of successes under his belt like the Fantastic Four and the Incredible Hulk, that was quite untrue. Stan Lee had a knack for finding characters that resonated with readers.

"When you try to create a new superhero, you have to keep creating a superpower that's different," Lee said. "With Hulk I had the strongest living human being. I thought, 'What's left?' While I was thinking, I saw a fly crawling on the wall, and I thought, '*That* would be cool!...' The next thing I needed was a name. Crawl-Man? Nah, that didn't have it. Insect-Man? I ran down the list. Mosquito-Man, Beetle-Man, Fly-Man. Then I hit on Spider-Man."

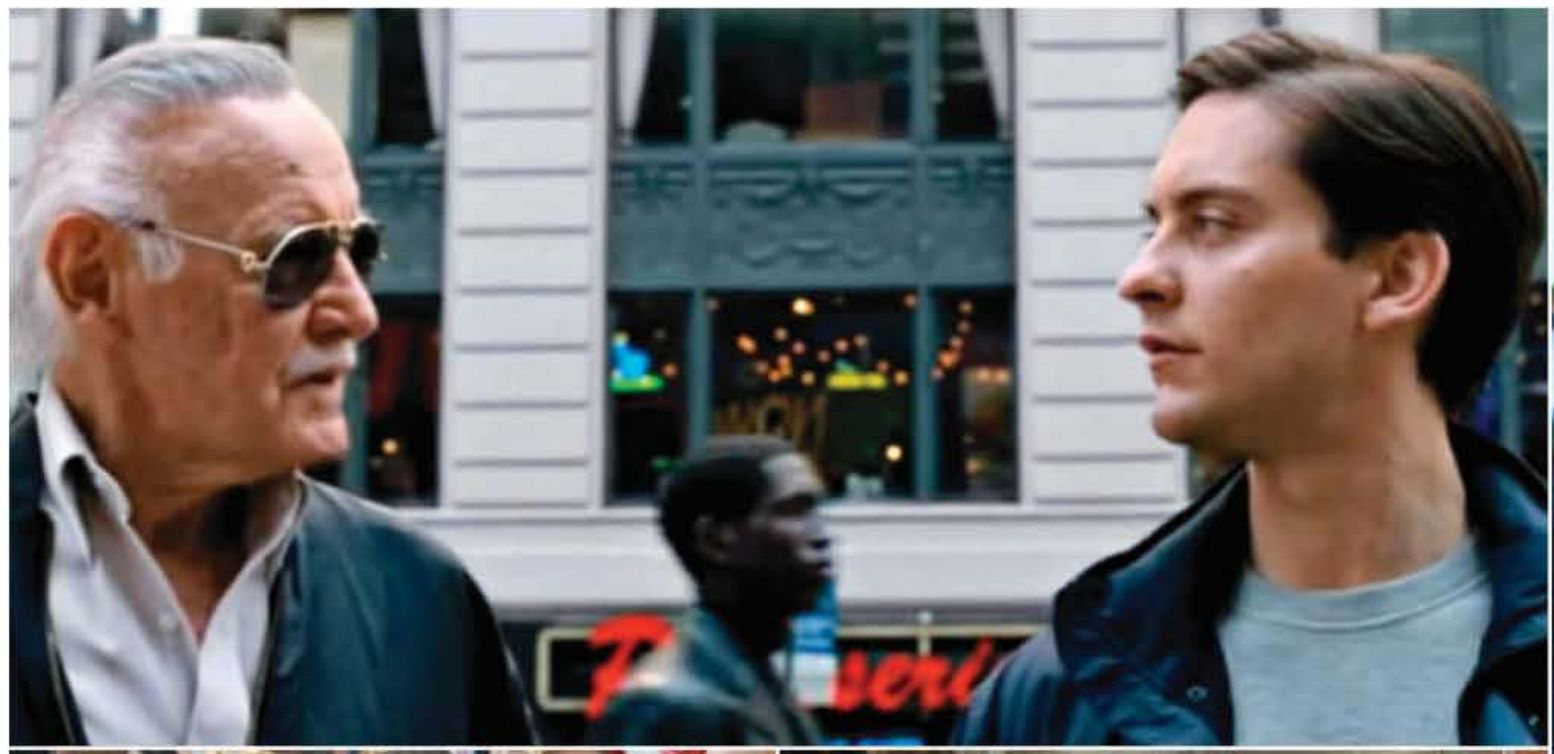
With those words, Lee's hands flashed in the air. His eyebrows shot up. "It somehow had a dramatic feeling, a scary feeling," he said. "I thought, 'That's it!' And lo, a legend was born."

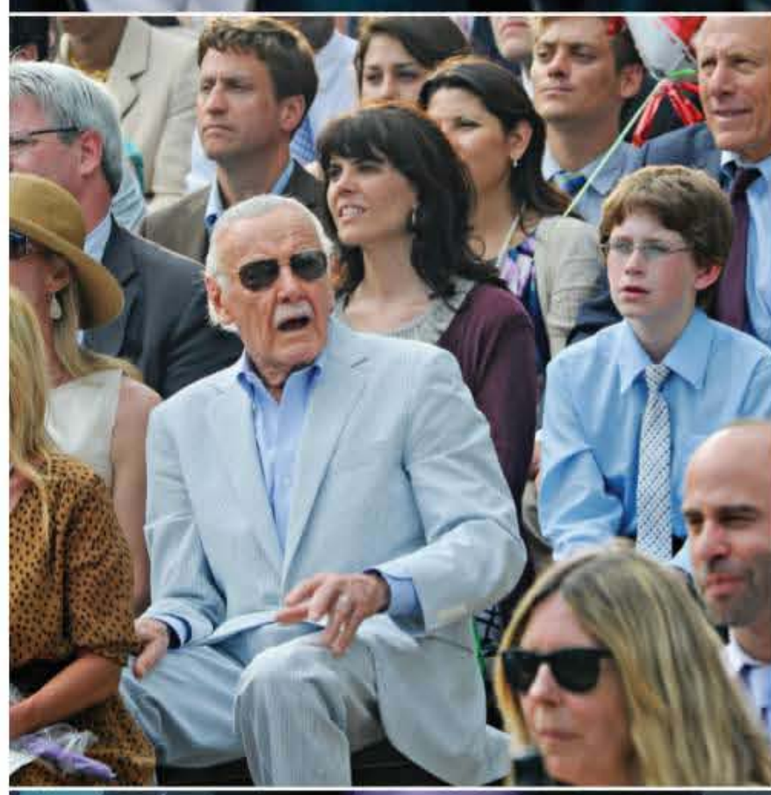
Lee shares credit with his earliest chief Spider-Man collaborator, Steve Ditko. "Steve is the guy who designed Spider-Man and gave Spider-Man so much of that eerie spidery feeling," said Lee. "Later he helped with the plots and did the plots. Steve has to share the blame as well as me."

The key to Spider-Man, he revealed, was failure. Peter Parker was a weakling, a teenager, and he wasn't on a mission of revenge—he was fueled by regret because he already had his power and failed to stop the crook who would go on to kill his beloved uncle Ben.

"With great power comes great responsibility" was a lesson that

→ Spider-Man looms large over the career of Stan Lee.





haunted him because he learned it too late.

"The most important thing is to make the reader care and sympathize with a character," Lee said. "The more problems a character has and the more unhappy and troubled he is, it makes that person seem human to [the readers]."

Lee was so taken with the idea of Spider-Man that he managed to sneak the hero into the 15th and final issue of *Amazing Fantasy*. "We were killing that magazine, much as I loved it," Lee said. It just hadn't been commercially successful. But it gave him an idea. "When you're doing the last issue of a magazine you're about to kill, nobody really cares what you put in it. So I figured I'd get Spider-Man out of my system." Lee and Ditko worked on the story together, and artist Jack Kirby did the dramatic lead image of Spidey swinging through the streets of Manhattan with a crook at his side.

"We put him on the cover and forgot about him," Lee said. "Then a couple months later, when sales figures came in, the publisher came to me and said, 'Stan, you remember that character that we both liked?'" The Stan Lee smile propped up that mustache again. "'Why don't we make a series out of him?'"

↑ **Clockwise from top left** Lee's cameo in 2002's *Spider-Man* with Tobey Maguire; Lee entertains the crowd from the red carpet in 2002; the icon as seen in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*; *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* and *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.

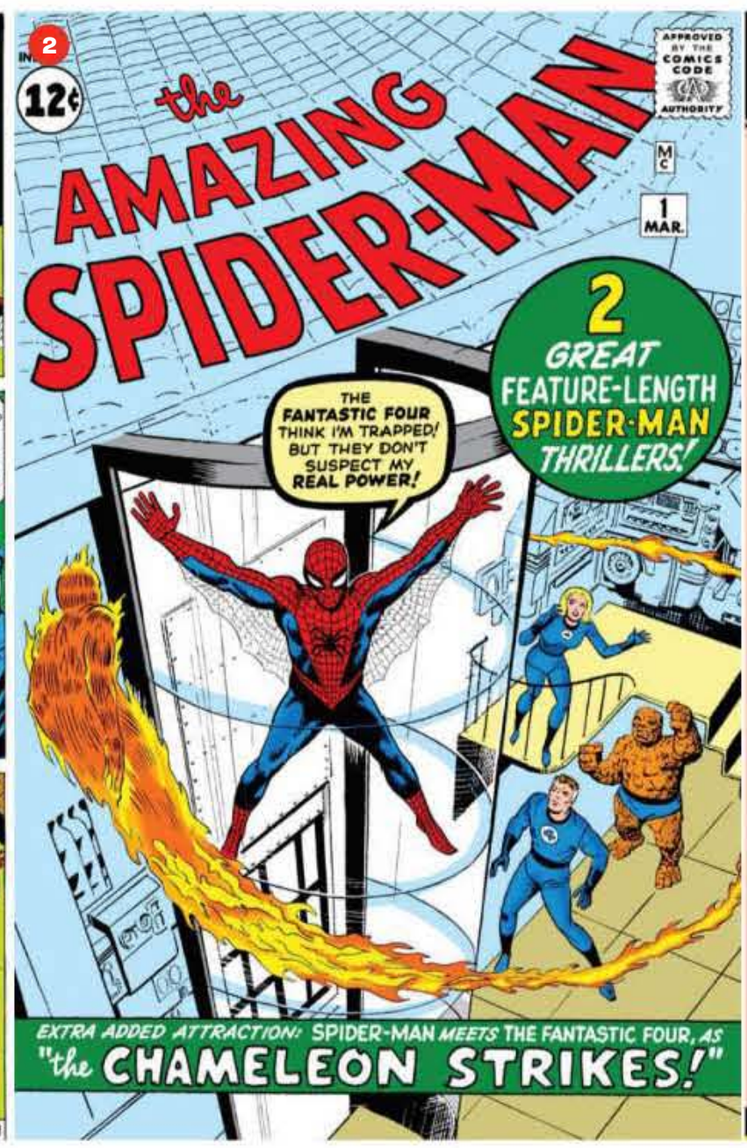
After 100 issues of *The Amazing Spider-Man,* Lee said, he turned over the writing to Roy Thomas. By that point, he had too many characters to juggle without a large team. "It was hard, of course, but I was letting go of all the characters at the same time," Lee said.

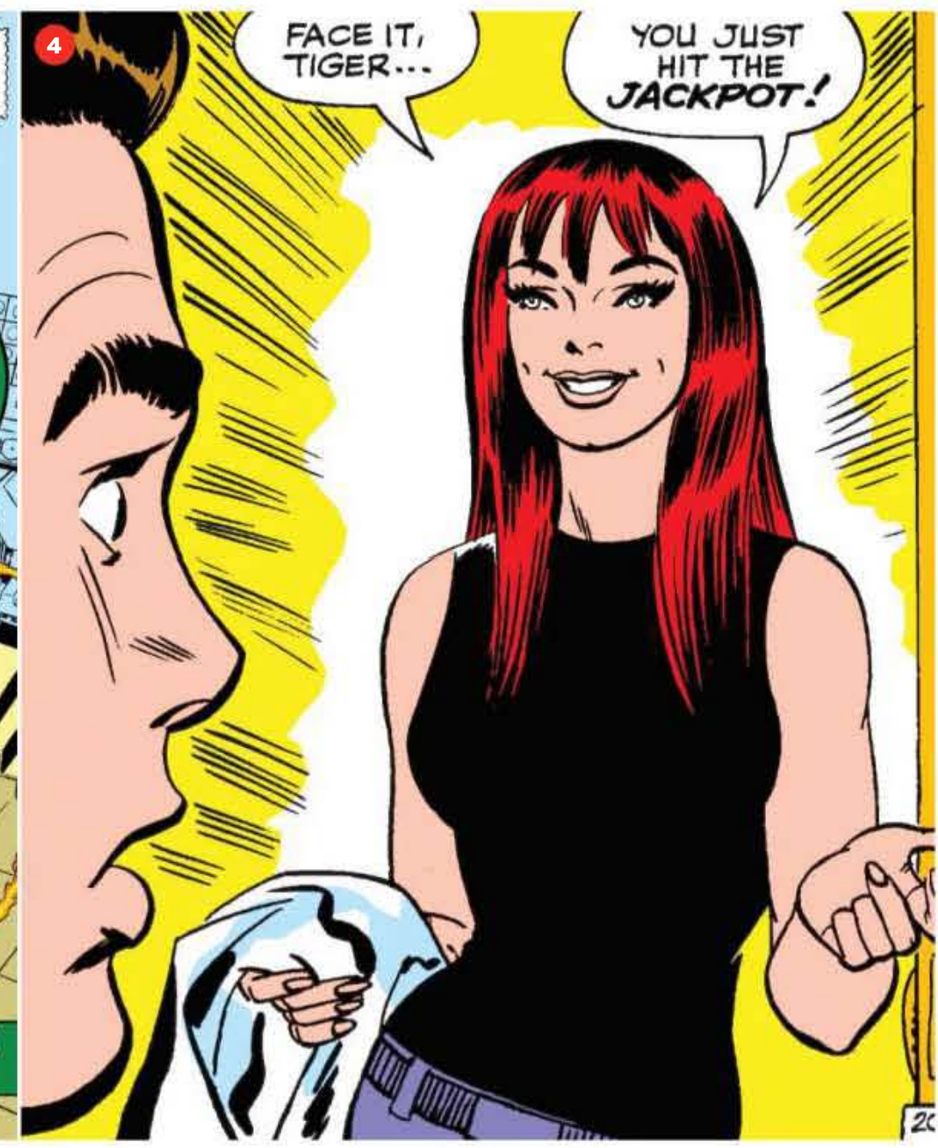
But of all the characters he helped create, Peter Parker remained his favorite. "In a way Spider-Man is more special than the others," he said. "Nothing ever goes right for Peter. I think for most people in the world, nothing ever goes right. He has his share of mistakes and his share of problems as he goes through life."

Peter Parker also never gives up, a trait he shares with his originator. Even after leaving Marvel and pursuing assorted other ventures, Lee remained the public face of the comic-book company up until his passing in 2018. His presence as a Marvel ambassador and cameo king was a reminder that larger-than-life heroes we love are simply a representation of the ideals of a puny human (or team of humans).

He relished his newfound fame as a star. "I'm one of the top cameo actors," he said. "I wish there was a cameo category in the Academy Awards."

# THE ULTIMATE




**1962**

**1.** Writer Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko's anthology comic book *Amazing Adult Fantasy* ("The Magazine That Respects Your Intelligence") shortens its title to ***Amazing Fantasy*** for its final issue, #15. An 11-page story at the beginning of the issue introduces "Spiderman"—the hyphen appears only once, in its title—as well as Aunt May, Uncle Ben, Flash Thompson and the phrase "with great power there must also come—great responsibility!"

**1963**

**2.** Seven months after Spidey's first appearance, the first issue of ***The Amazing Spider-Man*** is published (the same day as *Tales of Suspense* #39, which introduces Iron Man). On the cover he's been captured by the Fantastic Four; inside he meets J. Jonah Jameson and the villainous Chameleon.

**1965**

**3.** Peter Parker graduates from Midtown High School, which is inexplicably not in Midtown New York City but in Forest Hills, Queens. Three months later Peter begins his first year (on a science scholarship) at Empire State University in ***Amazing Spider-Man #31***, which also introduces Gwen Stacy, Harry Osborn and Professor Miles Warren, aka the Jackal.

**1966**

**4.** Steve Ditko, who had been plotting Spider-Man's comics on his own for quite a while, abruptly leaves Marvel. *Amazing Spider-Man* #39, the first issue drawn by John Romita rather than Ditko, reveals that the Green Goblin is Norman Osborn. A two-year-long running joke of Peter dodging Aunt May's attempts to set him up with her friend's niece pays off in #42, when statuesque redhead **Mary Jane Watson** appears at his door.

# TIMELINE

In 60 years in print and on film and TV, Spider-Man has been cloned, resurrected, impersonated, married—and has even occasionally died. We trace his delightfully tangled web.

**BY DOUGLAS WOLK**

**1967**

**5.** The **animated Spider-Man TV show** begins. Its theme song ("...does whatever a spider can...") has been stuck in everyone's head ever since. Meanwhile, Wilson Fisk, the villainous Kingpin, debuts in *Amazing Spider-Man* #50.

**1972**

**6.** *Amazing Spider-Man* #111 introduces the series' new writer **Gerry Conway,** an actual teenager: He's 19 at the time and goes on to write more than 100 issues of various Spider-Man titles.

**1973**

**7.** The Green Goblin murders Peter Parker's girlfriend Gwen Stacy in ***Amazing Spider-Man* #121**—and dies himself in the following issue. The editors of the series' Mexican edition *El Sorprendente Hombre-Araña* commission dozens of original stories, apparently to avoid reprinting Gwen's death.

**1974**

**8.** "Spidey Super Stories," a series of live-action skits in which Spider-Man's "dialogue" appears only as word balloons, debuts on the children's TV show ***The Electric Company***; the tie-in *Spidey Super Stories* comic book runs for eight years. Meanwhile, the Punisher debuts in ***The Amazing Spider-Man* #129,** and two issues later Aunt May nearly marries Doctor Octopus.

**1975**

**9.** The ridiculous concept album ***Spider-Man: Rock Reflections of a Superhero*** appears. It includes songs like "No One's Got a Crush on Peter" and "Gwendolyn," and between-song narration by Stan Lee. Despite its back cover artwork, it doesn't actually feature Black Panther on guitar or the Hulk on drums. Gerry Conway ends his initial run of Spider-Man comics with a story in which a clone of Spider-Man appears and (apparently) dies.

**1976**

**10.** Marvel and DC Comics join forces to produce their first intercompany crossover, ***Superman vs. the Amazing Spider-Man.*** Spidey gets a second monthly solo comic book: ***Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man,*** which lasts 263 issues.

**1977**

**11.** A live-action TV series, ***The Amazing Spider-Man,*** starring Nicholas Hammond, debuts. It runs for two brief seasons; the pilot episode is released in theaters overseas. The daily ***Amazing Spider-Man*** newspaper strip, initially by Stan Lee and John Romita, begins its 42-year run. Spider-Woman makes her first appearance in ***Marvel Spotlight #32***.

**1978**

**12.** The Japanese TV series ***Supaidaman*** begins. It stars Shinji Todo as Takuya Yamashiro, a monster-fighting hero who got superpowers from a warrior from Planet Spider and pilots a spaceship called the *Marveller* that transforms into a giant robot called Leopardon. He does have the same costume as Peter Parker, though. In ***Amazing Spider-Man #185,*** Peter is supposed to graduate from college but is missing a required gym credit.

**1979**

**13.** The Black Cat, Spider-Man's occasional nemesis and frequent FWB, debuts in ***Amazing Spider-Man #194***. The next issue, Peter Parker learns that Aunt May has died. (Five issues later, it turns out Mysterio faked her death.)

**1981**

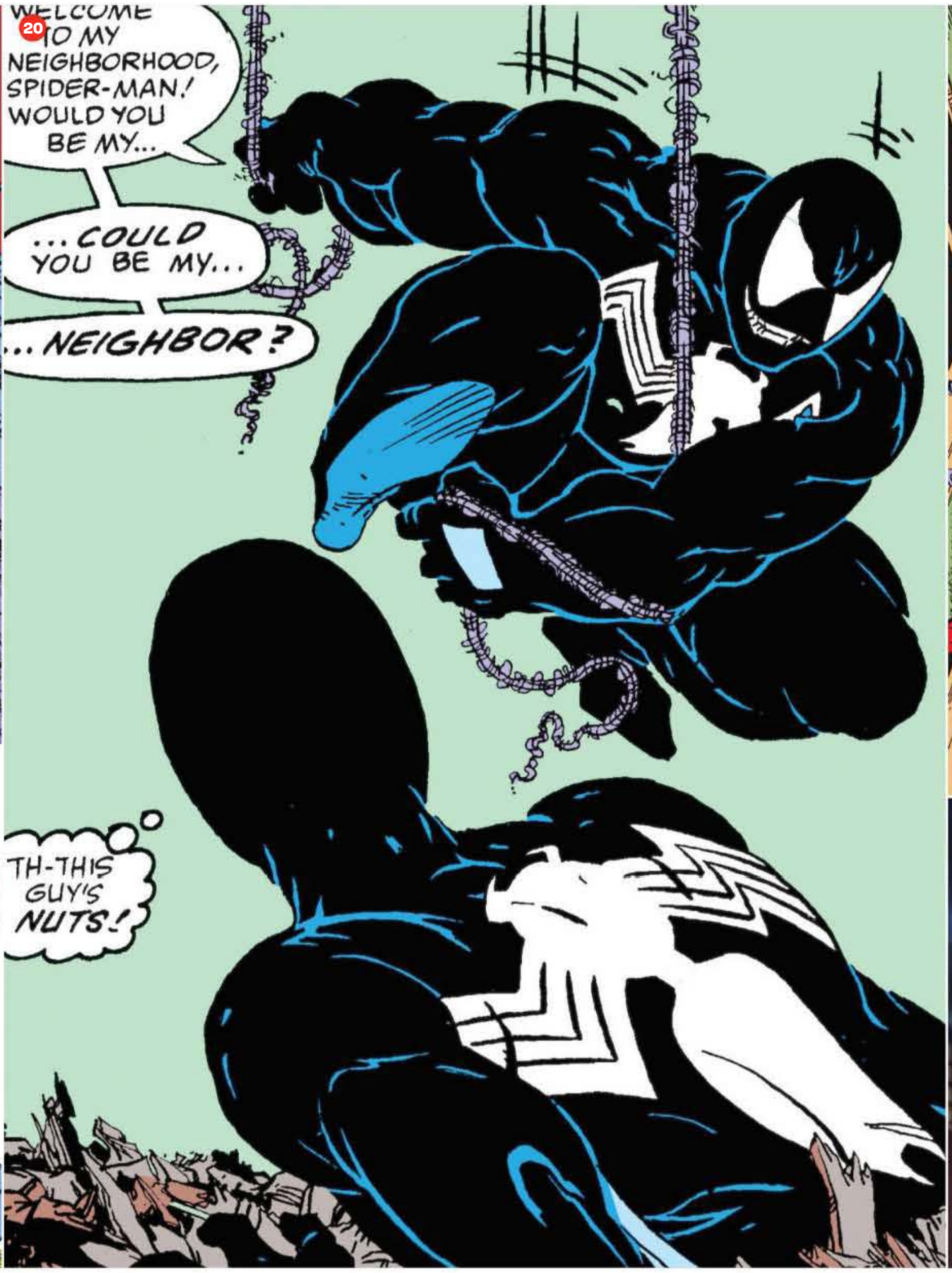
**14.** Two new animated Spidey TV series appear: the syndicated ***Spider-Man*** and NBC's ***Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends***. The latter also features Iceman, a longtime member of the X-Men comics, and Firestar, who was created for the show.

**1982**

**15.** ***Spider-Man***, a vertical scroller for the Atari 2600 console, is the first Spidey video game. Programmed entirely by Laura Nikolich, it involves the web-swinger climbing buildings and avoiding the Green Goblin's pumpkin bombs.

**1983**

**16.** ***Amazing Spider-Man #238*** introduces his new archenemy, the Hobgoblin. The mystery of the Hobgoblin's true identity is compounded over the next few years by Spider-Man's writers and editors disagreeing about what that true identity should be. The one-off comic *Marvel Tails* introduces Peter Porker, aka Spider-Ham, a joke that turns out to be more durable than anyone would have guessed.




**1984**

**17.** Spider-Man gets a new costume—solid black with a white spider design and much easier to draw than the familiar red-and-blue-and-webs look—in ***Amazing Spider-Man #252.*** The black costume, it eventually turns out, is secretly a malevolent alien symbiote.

**1985**

**18.** Cannon Films options the rights to make a Spider-Man movie for $225,000, beginning a 17-year struggle to bring Peter Parker to the big screen. ***Web of Spider-Man,*** a third simultaneous monthly solo series, begins its decade-long run.

**1987**

**19.** Following a 21-year courtship, **Peter Parker marries Mary Jane Watson.** There are simultaneous ceremonies in *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #21, the *Amazing Spider-Man* newspaper strip and a live event at Shea Stadium. Immediately upon returning from his honeymoon, Spidey is "killed" and replaced by Kraven the Hunter in the classic "Kraven's Last Hunt" story line.

**1988**

**20.** Artist **Todd McFarlane** joins *Amazing Spider-Man* with issue #298 and draws the first appearance of Venom in the following issue.

**1990**

**21.** A fourth simultaneous monthly series begins, simply called ***Spider-Man*** and initially written and drawn by McFarlane. Its first issue sells more than 2.5 million copies.

**1994**

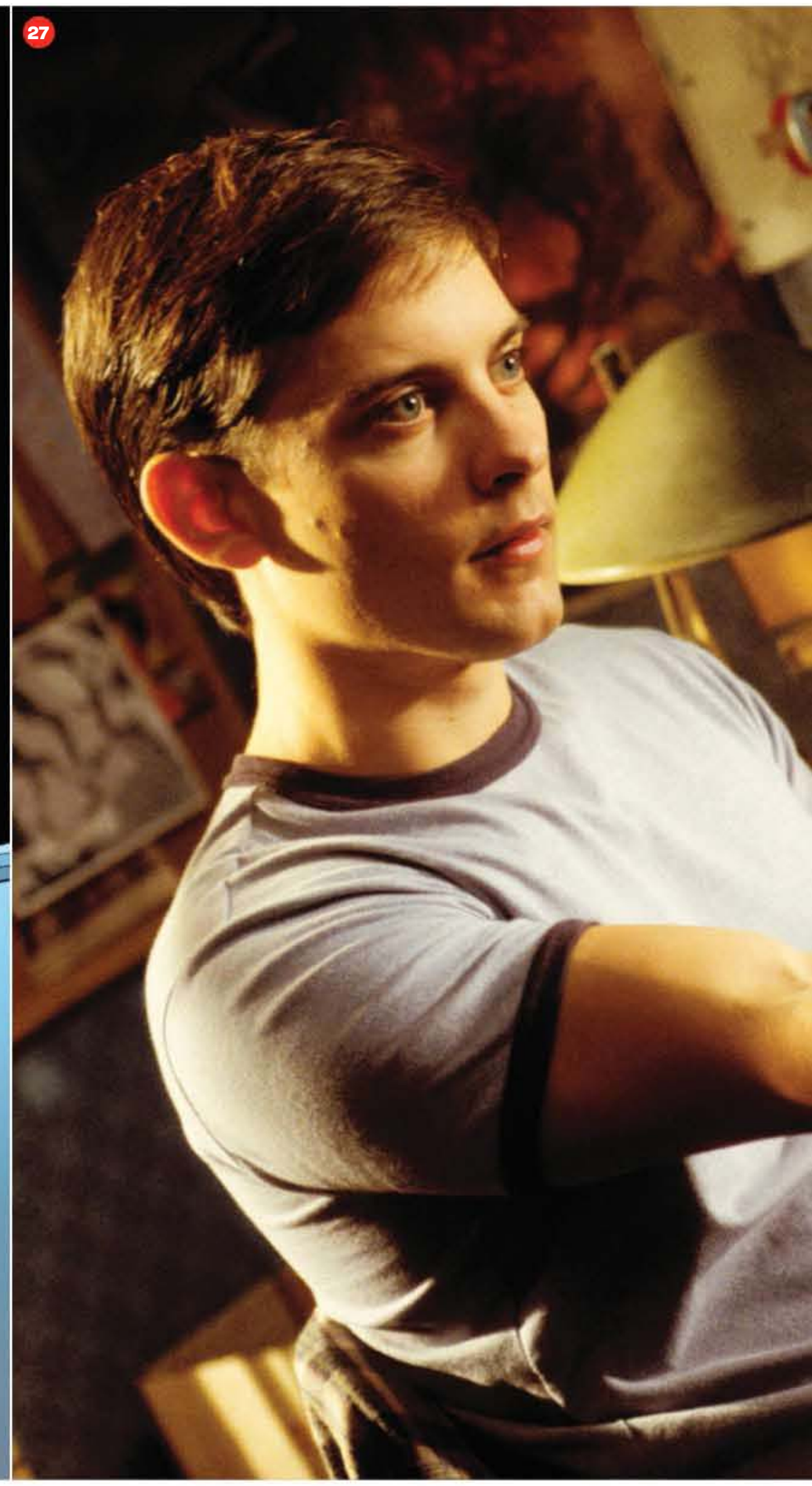
**22.** It turns out that Peter's clone from 1975 survived, is now calling himself Ben Reilly and may or may not be the original version of Peter. The Spider-Man comics' "Clone Saga" drags on for more than two years. Meanwhile, ***Spider-Man: The Animated Series*** begins its five-year run.

**1995**

**23.** Aunt May tragically dies in ***Amazing Spider-Man #400*** after revealing to Peter that she's known his secret for a long time and that he has her blessing. For two months the Spider-Man comics are replaced by Scarlet Spider comics, starring Ben Reilly.

**1998**

**24.** Aunt May is discovered to be alive after all in ***Spider-Man #97.*** The explanation is that the "Aunt May" who knew Peter's secret and died was actually an actress whom Norman Osborn had hired to impersonate her, but let's all talk about something else now! Right after, all the Spider-Man comics are relaunched with new #1 issues (but, as always, don't reboot the story).




**1999**

**25.** The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man ride opens at Universal's theme park Islands of Adventure, reportedly costing $75 million to build. Five years later, another version of it opens at Universal's theme park in Japan. **Sony Pictures,** meanwhile, pays a bit more than $10 million for the rights to make Spider-Man movies and live-action TV shows.

**2000**

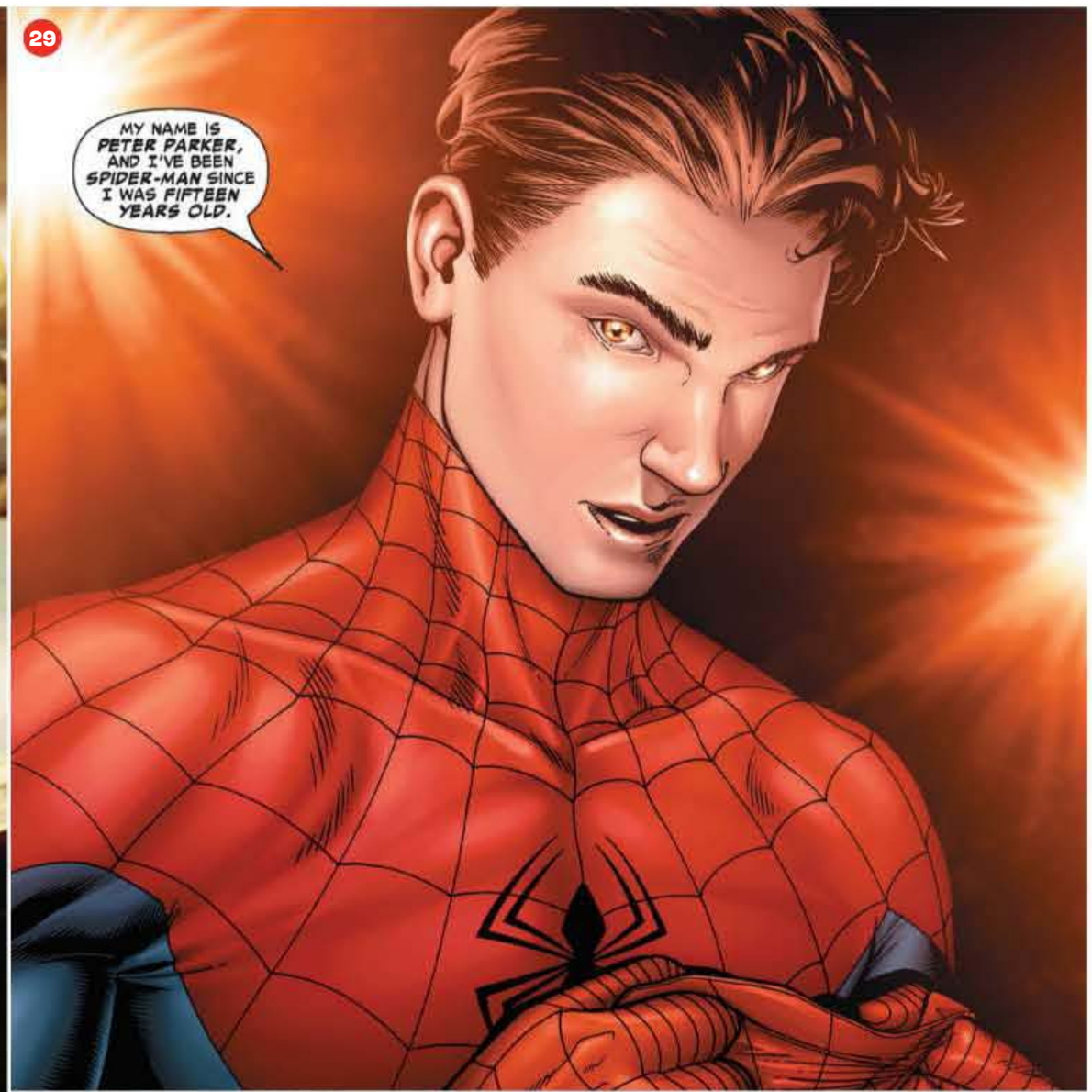
**26.** Teenage Peter Parker is bitten by the radioactive spider in ***Ultimate Spider-Man* #1**—the first of Marvel's long-running "Ultimate" line of comics, set in a universe of their own. Brian Michael Bendis and Mark Bagley will respectively write and draw all of its first 111 issues, still a record for Marvel's superhero comics.

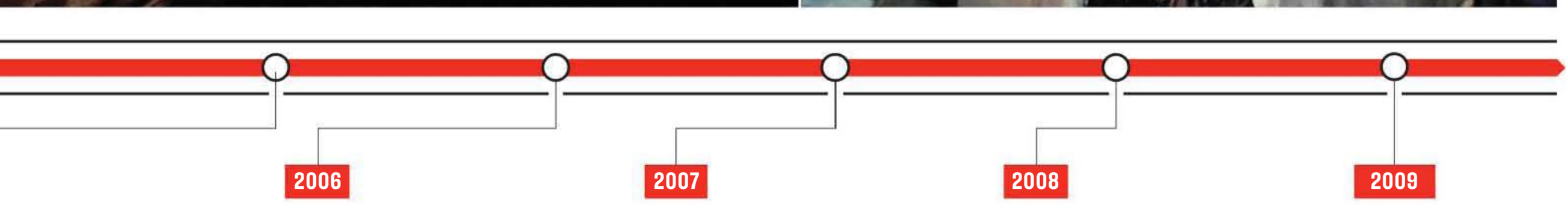
**2002**

**27. Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man,*** starring Tobey Maguire, finally brings Spidey to American theater screens.

**2005**

**28. *House of M: Spider-Man*** is a comics miniseries about an alternate-universe Peter Parker who's never had anything go wrong for him: He's a universally loved superhero/pro wrestler managed by his alive-and-well uncle Ben, married to Gwen Stacy, and he employs J. Jonah Jameson as his publicist/whipping boy. Unsurprisingly this version of Peter is a total creep.



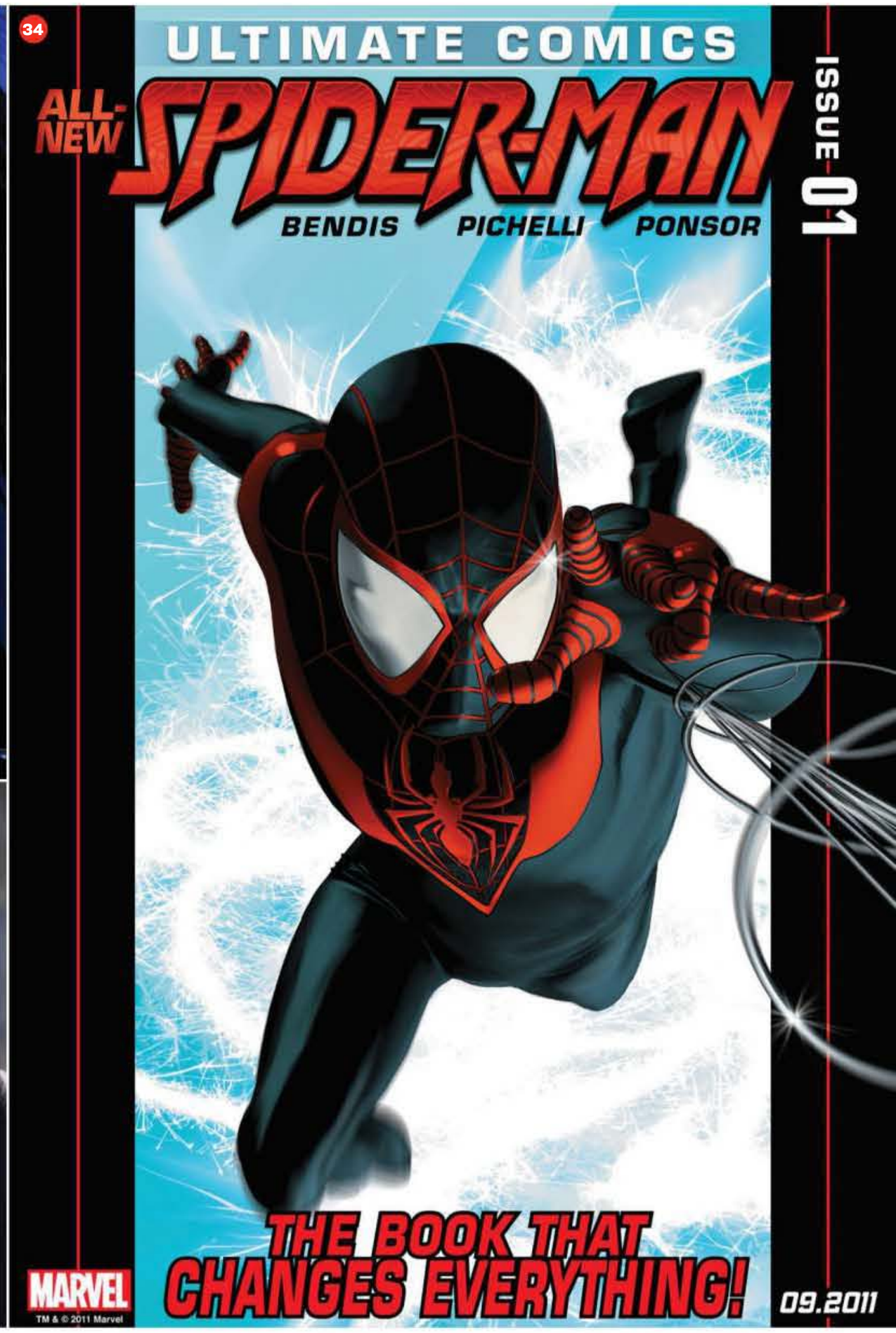



**29.** In the comics story line ***Civil War,*** Peter Parker reveals his dual identity to the world, which sends his life spiraling into catastrophe.

**30.** ***Spider-Man 3*** is released. Meanwhile, in the Spider-Man comics, the infamous "One More Day" sequence involves Peter making a deal with the demi-Satanic character Mephisto: the world will forget that he's Spider-Man, but in exchange, his marriage to Mary Jane will retroactively never have happened.

**31.** An anonymous donor gives the Library of Congress **Steve Ditko's original artwork** from the first Spider-Man story. The fondly remembered animated *The Spectacular Spider-Man* TV series begins its first of two seasons. The *Amazing Spider-Man* comics, now published three times a month, introduce a new villain called Mister Negative (later seen in the game Marvel's Spider-Man), and a new superheroine called Jackpot (who turns out *not* to be Mary Jane).

**32.** Aunt May marries J. Jonah Jameson's father in ***Amazing Spider-Man* #600,** which makes Peter and JJJ "brothers." *Spider-Man Noir,* an alternate-universe Peter Parker whose adventures are set in the 1930s, debuts; he later turns up in the 2018 film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.




**2010**

**33.** Previews begin on Broadway for ***Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark,*** a stage musical with songs by U2's Bono and the Edge that had been in development since 2002. It finally opens seven months later, to savage reviews.

**2011**

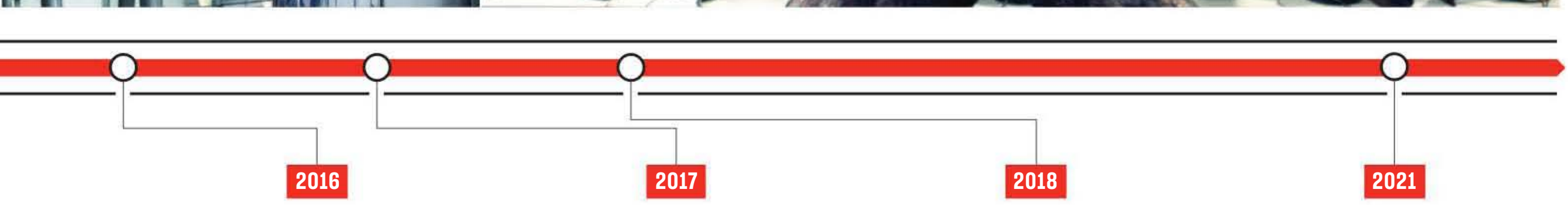
**34.** Following the death of the Ultimate Universe's Peter Parker, **Miles Morales** makes his first appearance in *Ultimate Fallout* #4: a Black and Latino kid with his own set of spider-powers, Miles decides to take up the Spider-Man identity as a tribute to Peter.

**2012**

**35.** Marc Webb's ***The Amazing Spider-Man,*** starring Andrew Garfield as Peter, reboots Spider-Man on film. Disney XD's animated series *Ultimate Spider-Man* begins its four-season run. The *Amazing Spider-Man* comic book's 700th issue purports to be its last: Doctor Octopus kills Peter Parker and takes over his body, and the series is replaced by *The Superior Spider-Man,* with Doc Ock operating as Spidey, for more than a year.

**2014**

**36.** *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* is released. Peter Parker returns to his body for a new *Amazing Spider-Man* comics series, again relaunched with a new #1. The **"Spider-Verse"** comics event teams up and references "every Spider-Man ever," including Spider-Girl (Peter and MJ's daughter from an alternate universe), Spider-Ham, "the guy from *Seabiscuit,*" "the guy from *The Social Network*" and the Spider-Man seen in the old Hostess cupcakes ads, plus more.




**37.** The Marvel Cinematic Universe introduces its new Peter Parker, played by **Tom Holland,** in *Captain America: Civil War*. "The Clone Conspiracy" briefly resurrects nearly every character from Spider-Man comics who's ever died, as clones. (A few stick around.) Miles Morales gets a new comics series, simply called *Spider-Man*.

**38.** Jon Watts's ***Spider-Man: Homecoming,*** starring Holland, lands in theaters.

**39.** Sony releases two Spider-Man-related movies: the live-action ***Venom*** and the animated ***Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,*** the first film to feature Miles Morales. Dan Slott concludes his decade-long tenure on *Amazing Spider-Man*, having written well over 150 issues; subsequently, Marvel Comics publishes its fifth issue to be called *Amazing Spider-Man* #1. The PlayStation game Marvel's Spider-Man sells 3.3 million copies in its first three days.

**40.** A copy of Spidey's first appearance in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 sells at auction for $3.6 million, the highest price ever paid for a comic book. ***Spider-Man: No Way Home,*** the final Spidey film under Tom Holland's current contract, borrows some plot points from 2007's "One More Day," with a twist courtesy of Doctor Strange, and brings the "multiverse" concept to the MCU.

THE THEME SONG

# Spider-Man's Greatest Hits

From an earworm anthem to a big-budget Broadway show and beyond, the hero has a musical history few comic-book characters can rival. **BY OLIVER SAVA**

**CALL IT THE CATCHIEST THEME SONG** in the pop culture lexicon: 1967's *Spider-Man* Saturday morning cartoon brought with it the most distinctly hummable, easily memorable musical tribute to a superhero ever penned. "Spider-Man/ Spider-Man/ does whatever a spider can…" You know you know the rest.

Penned by Paul Francis Webster, the same Academy Award-winning lyricist who wrote classics including "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing," and Bob Harris, the lines riffing on Spidey's origins and his unique abilities were dashed off in an hour, yet they've continued to make a lasting impression.

Artists ranging from the Ramones and Aerosmith to Michael Bublé have covered the theme. There's even a "Weird Al" Yankovic parody reimagining Billy Joel's "Piano Man" as a torch song about perpetually put-upon Peter Parker. (How many superheroes can lay claim to that dubious honor?)

Recognizing just how ingrained the melody is in Spidey's identity, composer Michael Giacchino's opted to make the song a key motif in his scores for *Homecoming*, *Far From Home* and *No Way Home*. Yet the delightfully campy track isn't the only number in Spider-Man's musical repertoire. In the last decade or so, the character's branched out beyond simply "spinning a web any size and catching thieves just like flies."

The $65 million-plus Broadway musical *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* put the webslinger front and center—with mixed results. Directed by Julie Taymor, the visionary behind Disney's popular *The Lion King* stage adaptation, with music by U2's Bono and the Edge, the production underwent a famously troubled development process and opened in 2011 after a record 182 preview performances to largely disastrous reviews.

*EW* called it "a mostly lackluster collection of forgettable tunes that play like U2 B-sides," with lyrics described as "a consistently baffling, mumble-mouthed mush of pablum." Still, a retooled show managed to pack houses for two years and was even nominated for two Tony Awards in 2012 for scenic and costume design.

The next reinvention fared far better. The Oscar-winning animated feature *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* brought the hero back to new musical heights thanks to its soundtrack of original hip-hop, rap and R&B songs.

If Peter Parker's musical foundation is the corny but charming '60s theme, it's hard to think of a more extreme shift for the sound of the new Spider-Man, Miles Morales, an Afro Latino teenager from Brooklyn, voiced by actor Shameik Moore. Yet there's no question the music helped connect Miles to a contemporary audience: The single, "Sunflower" by Post Malone and Swae Lee, went to No. 1 on the Billboard Pop Charts, stayed in the Top 10 for 33 weeks and was nominated for two Grammy Awards, including Record of the Year.

*Into the Spider-Verse* even spawned a special five-track EP, *A Very Spidey Christmas,* which featured Moore performing a Miles Morales take on "Joy to the World." Sample lyrics: "Joy to the world/ that I just saved/ You all can sleep soundly."

Is it as snappy as "Action is his reward"? Maybe not, but close.

↗ **From top** The musical *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* stretches some creative boundaries; Miles Morales rocks out to Post Malone and Swae Lee's "Sunflower" in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse.*

# SPIDEY GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

With Sam Raimi's 2002 smash hit *Spider-Man,* **TOBEY MAGUIRE** brought webslinger Peter Parker to the big screen—and helped launch a new era of superheroes on film.

**BY REBECCA ASCHER-WALSH**

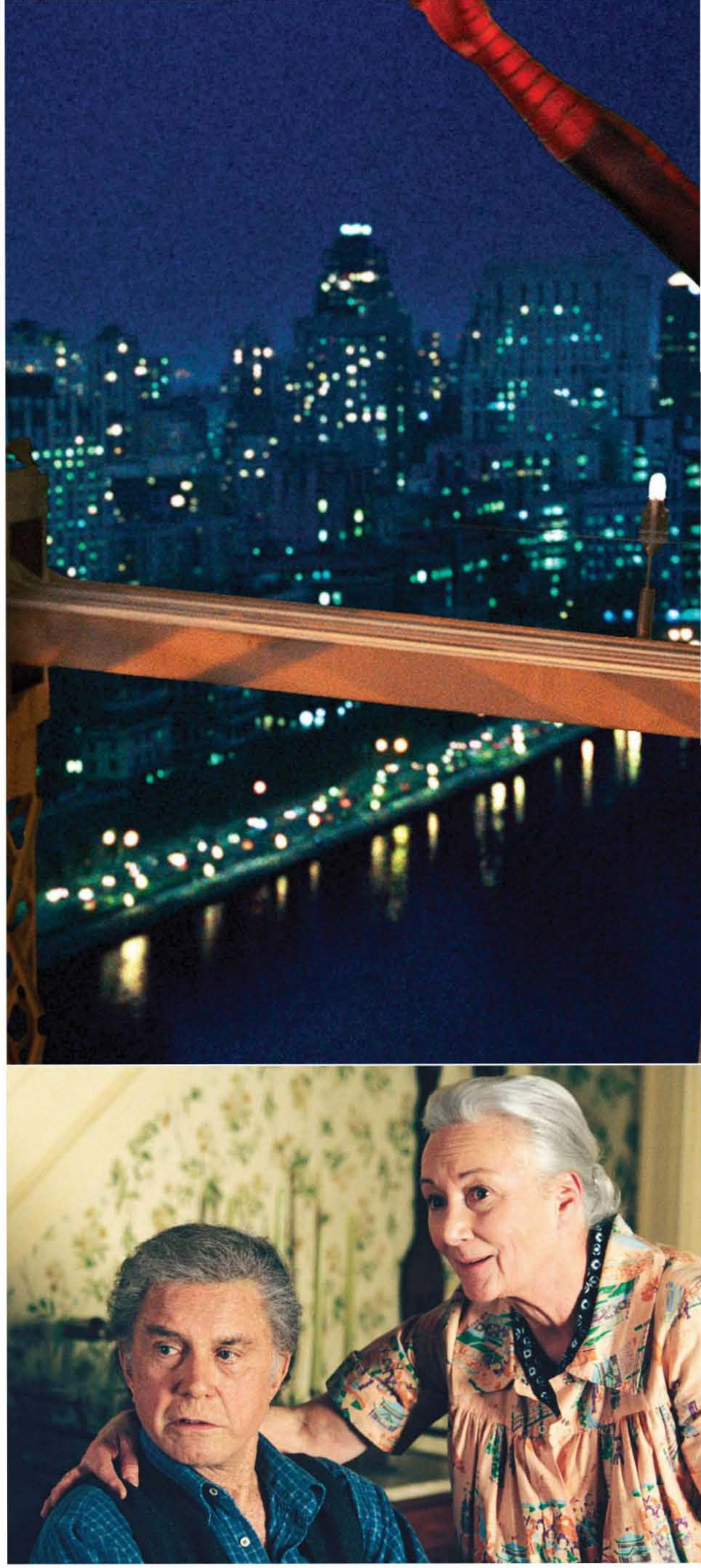
Tobey Maguire as Peter Parker.

# B

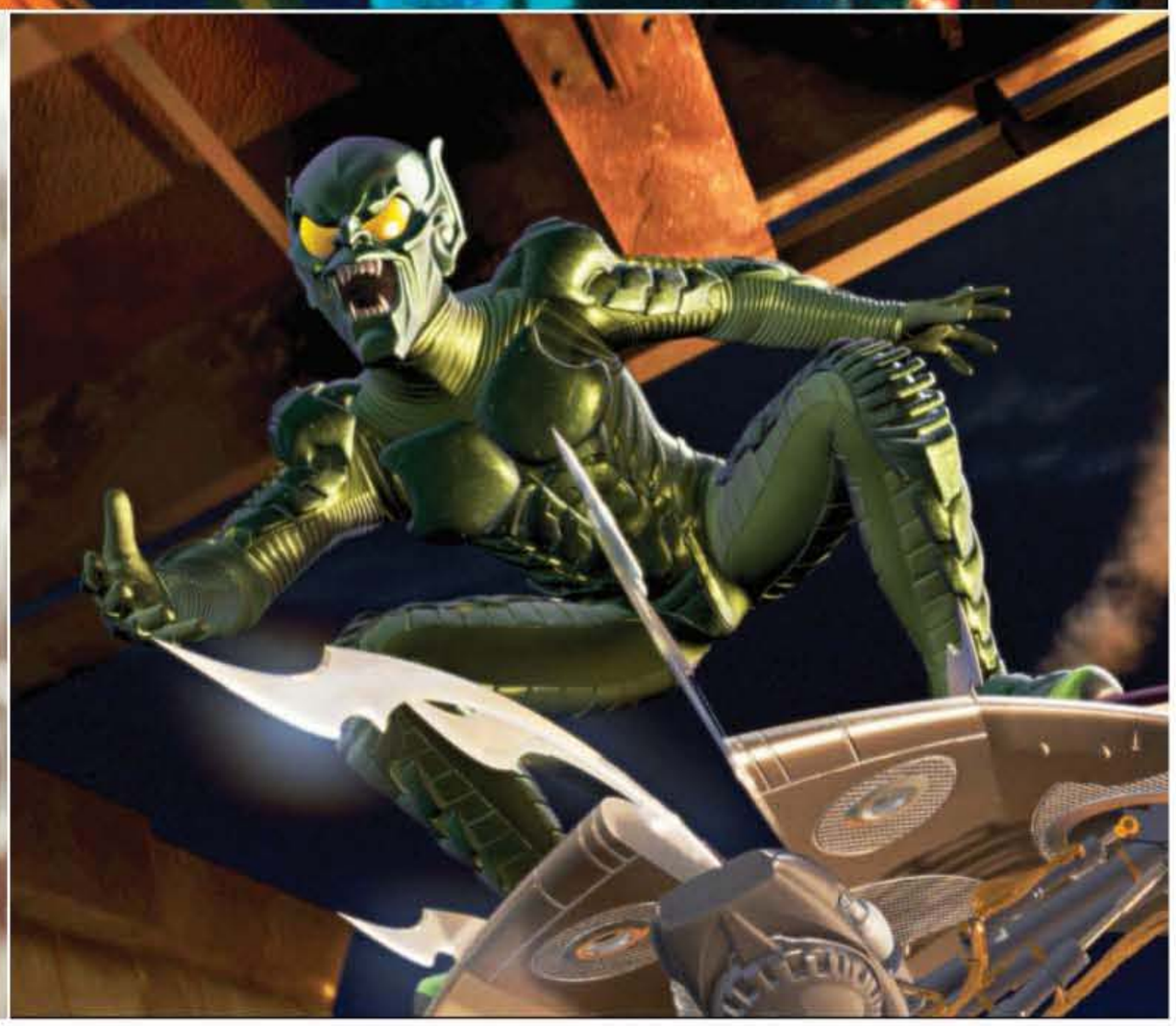
**BY THE TIME TOBEY MAGUIRE** stepped in front of the cameras suited up as Spider-Man in 2001, the mere fact that cameras were rolling seemed like a superhero trick. The property had been involved in legal dustups and lawsuits for close to a decade, as major studios battled for the rights to the Marvel property before they ultimately landed at Sony. Now, not only was the studio betting a reported $100 million that the film would be a blockbuster, but it was gambling on an unproven action star to carry the show.

For the comic book's first big-screen iteration, screenwriter David Koepp (*Jurassic Park*) and director Sam Raimi—who had made 1990's *Darkman*—envisioned a faithful adaptation of Spider-Man's origin story: The orphaned, nerdy teenager Peter Parker is bitten by a mutant spider, discovering what it takes to tackle the Green Goblin midair. But back on earth, Spider-Man would also be a coming-of-age tale about an unmoored misfit, mourning a family tragedy and pining after the girl next door Mary Jane Watson. In other words, character development—and the characters' flaws—would share center stage with the groundbreaking F/X. Explained Raimi: "The human story has always been the strength of the comic."

The studio considered A-listers



↗ **Clockwise from top** Spider-Man swings into action; Willem Dafoe's Green Goblin; "Rain was pouring up and down my nose," said Maguire about this steamy kiss with Kirsten Dunst as Mary Jane Watson; Uncle Ben (Cliff Robertson) and Aunt May (Rosemary Harris).



including Ewan McGregor and Leonardo DiCaprio, but it was Maguire's tender turn in 1999's *The Cider House Rules* that earned him the starring role after a screen test proved his fighting mettle. "We needed someone who . . . lived with a certain doubt and angst," Raimi explained. "The studio was thinking of somebody who had a sexier appearance . . . but once they saw the screen test, they understood." Maguire expressed no concerns. "He's someone who agonizes a lot about his role in life," he said of Parker. "I knew that I could pull [it] off without disappointing people."

To play Mary Jane Watson, the filmmakers talked about Kate Hudson and Alicia Witt before hiring Kirsten Dunst only days before filming began. Raimi warned her during her screen test that she would have lots of stunts, to which she remembered responding, "'Yeah, I'm up for everything. . . . You can hang me here, hang me there.'" But, she admitted, "there was a lot more hanging than I thought there'd be." Filling out the cast were Willem Dafoe as the Green Goblin, Cliff Robertson as Uncle Ben, Rosemary Harris as Aunt May, James Franco as Harry Osborn and J.K. Simmons playing J. Jonah Jameson.

The casting, as well as the artful mix of superhuman dazzle and oh-so-human woe, were kismet. Released in 2002, *Spider-Man* became at the time the fifth-largest-grossing film in history, earning more than $800 million at the box office. The filmmakers, banking on success, had locked Maguire and Dunst into a sequel, and later that year the key players reassembled for *Spider-Man 2,* along with Alfred Molina (Frida) as the villainous half man, half octopus Doctor Octavius.

The script, cowritten by Pulitzer Prize-winning Michael Chabon (who later became showrunner of *Star Trek: Picard*) along with Alfred Gough and Miles Miller, continued to explore the conflict between Spider-Man's calling to save the world and Parker's emotional well-being (or lack thereof).

"Peter is constantly suffering and conflicted," said Maguire, who expressed his own conflict when he asked for filming to be delayed, citing a back injury; when the studio offered to replace him with Jake Gyllenhaal, Maguire stepped back up to receive his $17 million payday, a $13 million raise from the first film. The studio's $200 million investment was again handsomely repaid when the film opened in 2004, earning close to $800 million worldwide.

The team united again in 2006 for *Spider-Man 3,* with Raimi directing from a script he had cowritten. Parker finally begins to move toward a semblance of peace and contends with three villains:

↖ **Clockwise from left** Spidey faces off with Alfred Molina's Doc Ock atop a moving train; James Franco's Harry Osborn, fated to become the second Green Goblin, threatens Peter's life; Eddie Brock Jr. (Topher Grace) aka Venom puts Spidey in a jam; Peter confronts a dark reflection of himself.

Flint Marko/Sandman (Thomas Haden Church), Eddie Brock/Venom (Topher Grace) and Harry Osborn, now the New Goblin (Franco). Joining the cast were Bryce Dallas Howard as Gwen Stacy, Peter's lab partner, and James Cromwell as Gwen's father, Captain George Stacy.

With a reported budget of more than $300 million, it was the most expensive film made at the time. When it was released in 2007, some critics were unimpressed—Manohla Dargis of *The New York Times* called it "fizzled rather than fizzy"—but the audience had no such misgivings, and the film went on to earn almost $900 worldwide.

The trilogy's success had sent Hollywood into a flurry to get in on the superhero action and propelled Marvel Studios to launch its own billion-dollar franchise, christened with 2008's *Iron Man.* But *Spider-Man 3* marked the end for this creative team. In January 2010, Raimi withdrew from a fourth film, saying he couldn't make its intended summer 2011 release date and keep the film's "integrity." The cast—including Maguire—shortly followed suit. Maguire released a statement reading, "I am so proud of what we accomplished with the Spider-Man franchise over the last decade . . . [and] I am excited to see the next chapter unfold in this incredible story."

VIDEOGAMES

# Playing It Cool

Spidey's come a long way since his days as an Atari superstar. Now gamers can experience the joy of shooting webs and saving the (open) world.

**BY OLIVER SAVA**

**YOU COULD FEEL IT AS SOON AS** that familiar Marvel logo flipped onscreen, the sun peeking into Peter Parker's cluttered apartment: Insomniac Games' 2018 bestseller Marvel's Spider-Man was more cinematic event than videogame.

Awakened by a cell phone alarm, Peter scrambles out of bed to get ready, while the camera pans across news clippings of his heroic exploits and a shelf stacked with *Amazing Spider-Man* comics. (Yes, Spider-Man comics exist in this world.) He's soon swinging through the streets of Manhattan to what sounds an awful lot like the soundtrack to the latest Avengers movie. "Definitely one of our mantras was to design an experience that felt like you were playing a Marvel movie," John Paquette, the game's lead writer, tells *EW*.

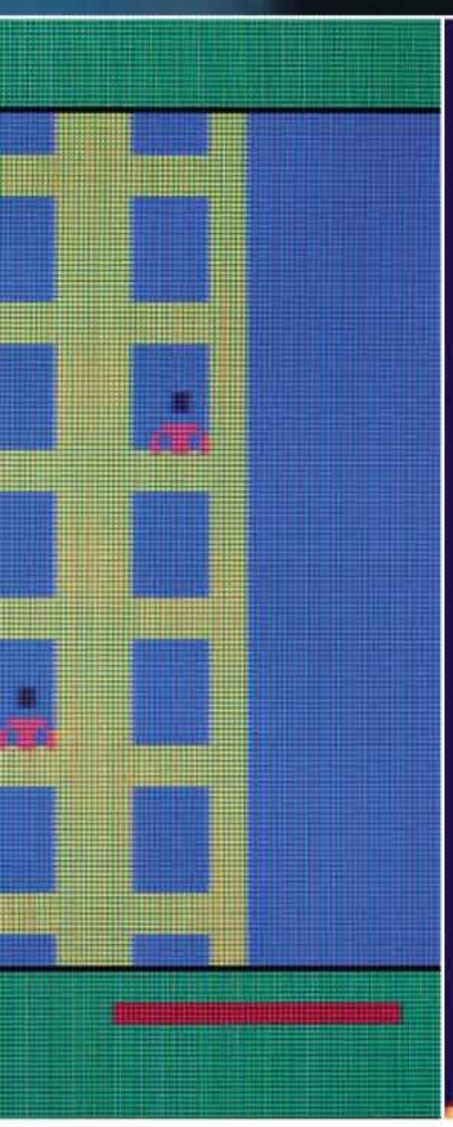
Although Insomniac was hardly the first company to bring Spidey to gaming, it was among the first to get it so incredibly right, thanks largely to advances in videogame technology that at last gave players the chance to defy gravity, beating up bad guys on the ground—and in the air. With its open-world, narrative-driven approach, Marvel's Spider-Man quickly broke records to become the bestselling superhero videogame ever.

His videogame origins weren't quite as auspicious. The first game to feature the character was 1982's Spider-Man, built for the Atari 2600. Players could guide Spidey to the top of buildings, avoiding obstacles along the way, but the title was essentially a copy of 1980's Crazy Climber—the biggest difference was the addition of webbing, which allowed for a wider range of movement.

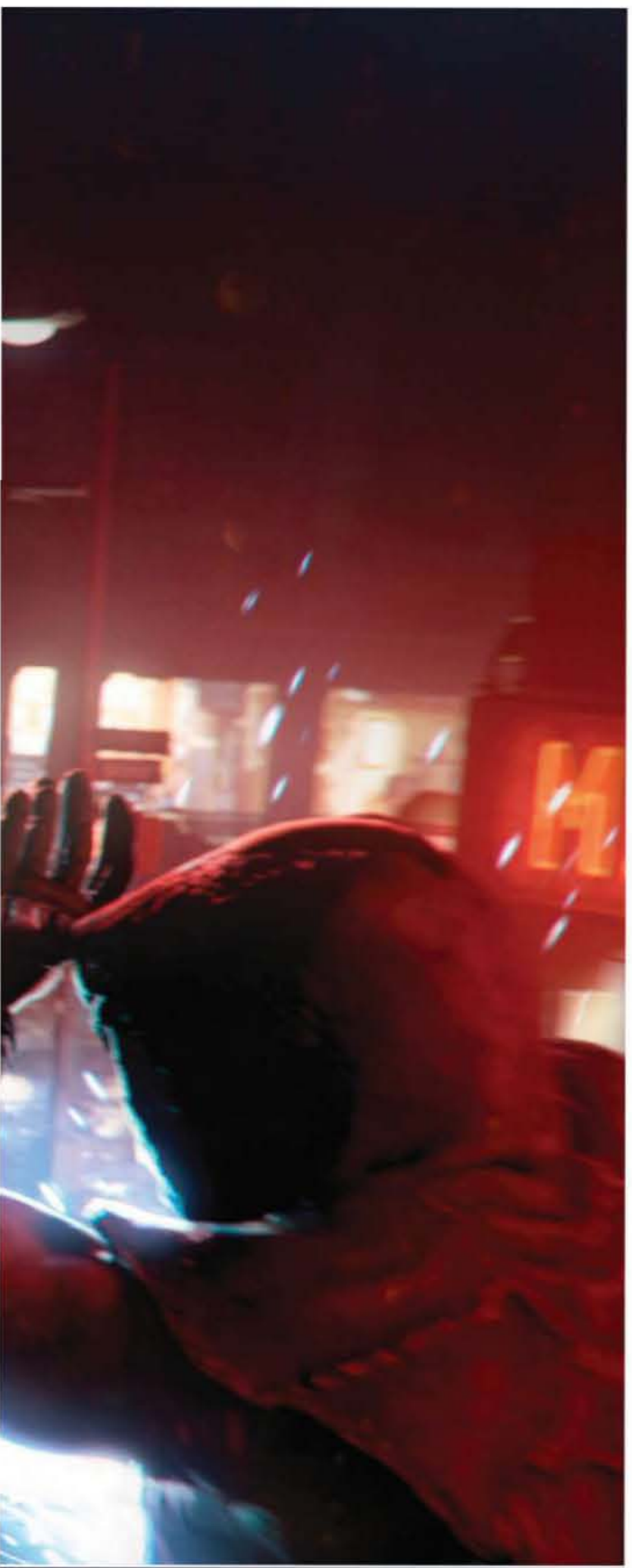
In the years that followed, Spider-Man was ubiquitous in side-scrolling platformers and beat 'em ups, often teaming up with other Marvel characters like Captain America, the X-Men, and Venom throughout the '80s and '90s. Then came Capcom's fighting games like 1995's Marvel Super Heroes and 1998's Marvel vs. Capcom: Clash of Super Heroes, which emphasized the brawler side of the character like never before.

With each new generation of gaming console, developers expanded on different aspects of the hero. In 2000, Spider-Man from Neversoft brought Spidey into three dimensions; four years later Treyarch's Spider-Man 2 broke new ground for web-swinging with a physics-based system that attached webs to actual points in the environment. Activision's 2010 release, Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions, switched up visual styles and gameplay mechanics with different iterations of Spider-Man—notably, it inspired the Spider-Verse comic-book event that itself inspired the Academy Award-winning *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.

↗ **Clockwise from top** Marvel's Spider-Man, released for the PlayStation 4 in 2018; the 1998 arcade game Marvel vs. Capcom: Clash of Super Heroes; the first Spider-Man game, built for the Atari 2600 in 1982.



Captured on PS5



↖ **Clockwise from top**
A planned 2023 release; Peter Parker shows his face in Marvel's Spider-Man: Remastered; Miles Morales in his titular game, released in 2020.

## THE BEST SPIDER-MAN STORIES ARE WHEN PETE'S WORLD AND SPIDER-MAN'S WORLD COLLIDE"

—BRYAN INTIHAR, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT INSOMNIAC GAMES

Whereas so many of the earlier game titles had centered on the costumed iteration of the hero, with Marvel's Spider-Man, Insomniac Games wanted to focus on the man beneath the mask, Peter Parker. *Amazing Spider-Man* comic-book writers Dan Slott and Christos Gage came on board to flesh out both sides of the character, and by highlighting Peter's perspective, the major moments in his personal life hit as hard as the blows he takes as in the blue-and-red webbed suit.

"The best Spider-Man stories are when Pete's world and Spider-Man's world collide," says Bryan Intihar, creative director at Insomniac Games. Marvel's Spider-Man brings the civilian world to life by having Peter spend time in the lab with his mentor Dr. Otto Octavius and at the F.E.A.S.T. shelter with his beloved aunt May.

Insomniac's 2020 follow-up for the PlayStation 5, Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales, built on its predecessor's success, letting players take on the role of Peter Parker's protégé in the first superhero game of the latest console generation. The developers sought to retain the same cinematic feel for the new title, though they animated Miles differently to indicate that the younger superhero is still gaining his footing and developing his own style.

The story sees Miles and his mother moving from Brooklyn to Harlem, and the creative team wanted the Afro Latino hero to be in touch with a neighborhood where those cultures coexist within the fabric of New York City. Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales also created new opportunities to explore Spider-Man's relationship with his community once the public finds out that he is a person of color.

"When Miles is uptown, people talk to him differently," says Evan Narcisse, a Marvel Comics writer and story consultant who suggested different dialogue conditions depending on where Spider-Man is in the city. "When you're a representative of a marginalized group with higher visibility, people either see themselves in you or they don't or they want to. It was a way of making that real-world dynamic part of the experience of playing the game."

No matter where gaming goes, the webslinger follows. In 2019 the Spider-Man: Far From Home Virtual Reality Experience offered gamers the chance to try out some first-person webslinging, but for the time being, conventional titles seem to be generating the most excitement. A forthcoming PlayStation-exclusive expansion of Marvel's Avengers adds Spider-Man to the team, and anticipation is high for the 2023 release of Insomniac's Marvel's Spider-Man 2, pitting Peter and Miles against Venom and Kraven the Hunter.

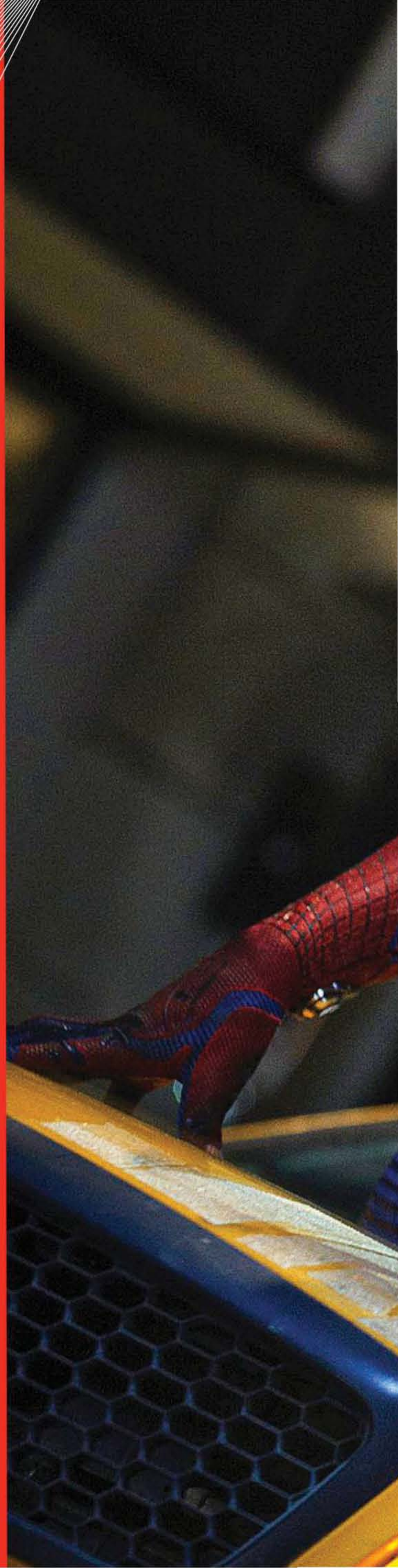
Details about that sequel are currently top secret, naturally. "There's an NDA that says, 'We will kill you if you say anything,' " Paquette jokes.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY NICK ROMANO

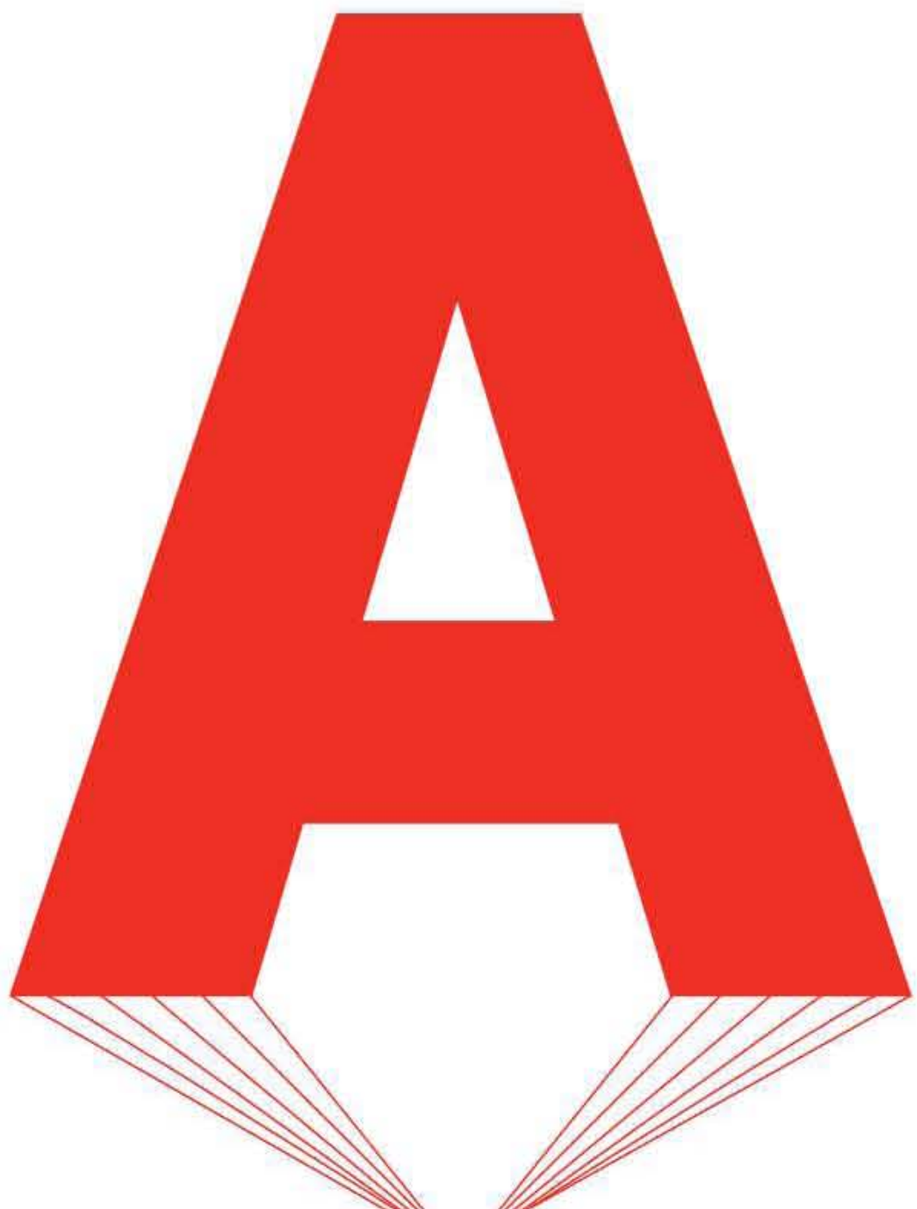
# SWING SHIFT

Brit **ANDREW GARFIELD** swooped in and took over as the friendly neighborhood good guy for a pair of blockbusters powered by indie spirit.

**BY AMY WILKINSON**



Andrew Garfield
as Peter Parker.



**AFTER THREE SUCCESSFUL SPIDER-MAN FILMS, DIRECTOR SAM RAIMI WAS** burned out. He'd signed on to helm *Spider-Man 4,* set for release in 2011, but the script—reportedly starting its fourth rewrite—just wasn't working. Realizing he couldn't maintain his creative integrity and get the movie done on time, Raimi withdrew from the project. Columbia Pictures pulled the plug on its planned sequels, and that was that.

The studio decided a reboot was the only way forward.

And so the search for a director to reimagine the studio's most valuable property began. Around that time Matt Tolmach, Columbia president turned Spider-Man producer, took a meeting with *(500) Days of Summer* director Marc Webb, whose 2009 indie romance had charmed audiences. Although Spider-Man was not on their agenda, talk eventually turned to the flailing franchise, and Webb revealed himself to be something of a comics nerd. He suggested a grittier take on the hero, one that leaned into Peter's grief and uncertainty over his parents' deaths. The job was soon his.

With the aptly named Webb on board, casting for a new Peter Parker kicked into high gear. Nearly every actor under the age of 30 read for the part, with names like Josh Hutcherson, Anton Yelchin, Logan Lerman and Jamie Bell in the mix. But it would be 26-year-old Andrew Garfield, fresh

↑ **Clockwise from left** Peter sticks around; Rhys Ifans's Dr. Curt Connors, transformed into the Lizard; Uncle Ben (Martin Sheen) and Aunt May (Sally Field); Peter's relationship with Gwen Stacy (Emma Stone) heats up.

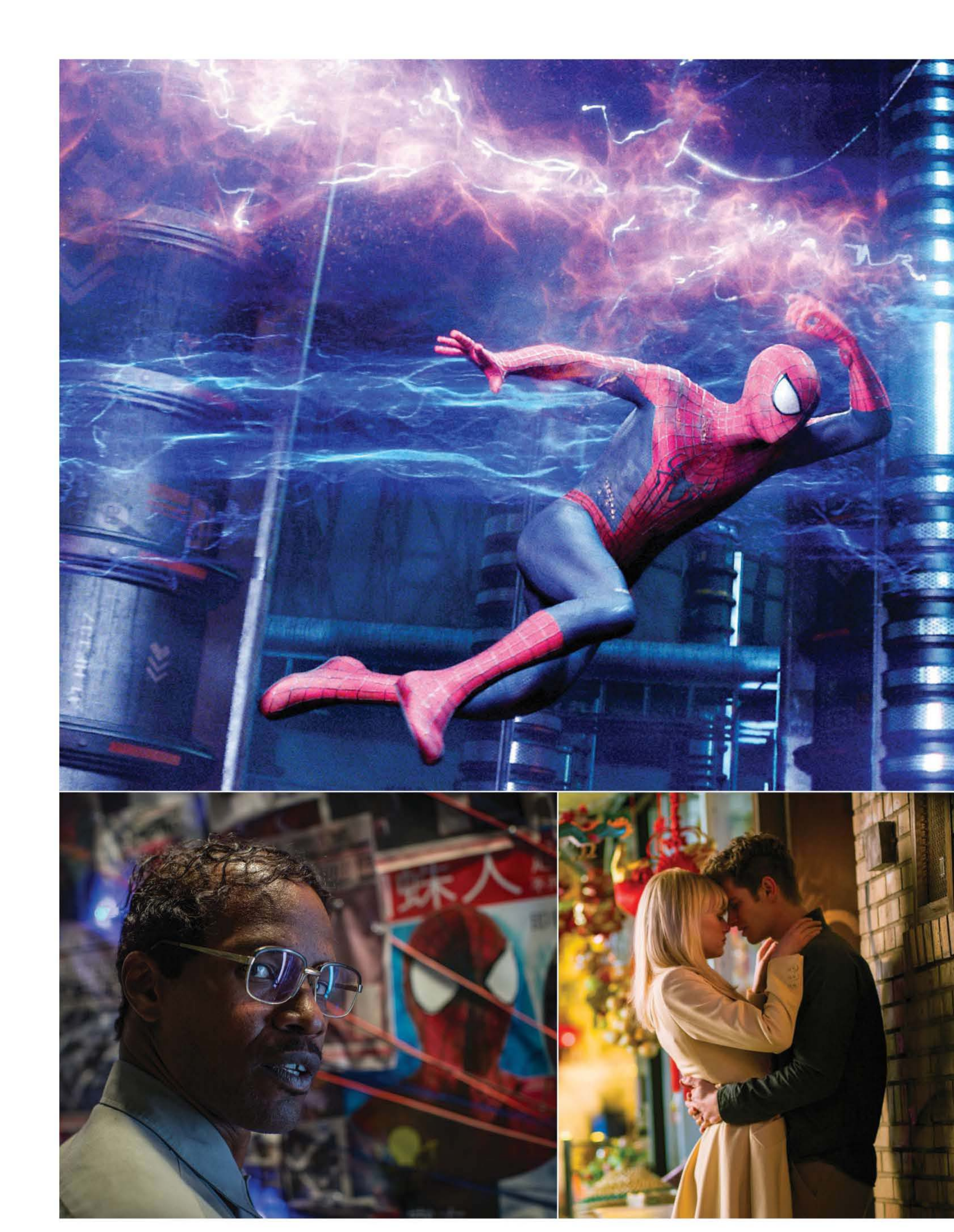
off his turn in David Fincher's 2010 film *The Social Network,* who would don the spandex suit. It wouldn't be his first spin as Spider-Man. During the casting process, Garfield sent Webb a photo of himself at 3 years old, dressed as Spidey, to express his passion for the project.

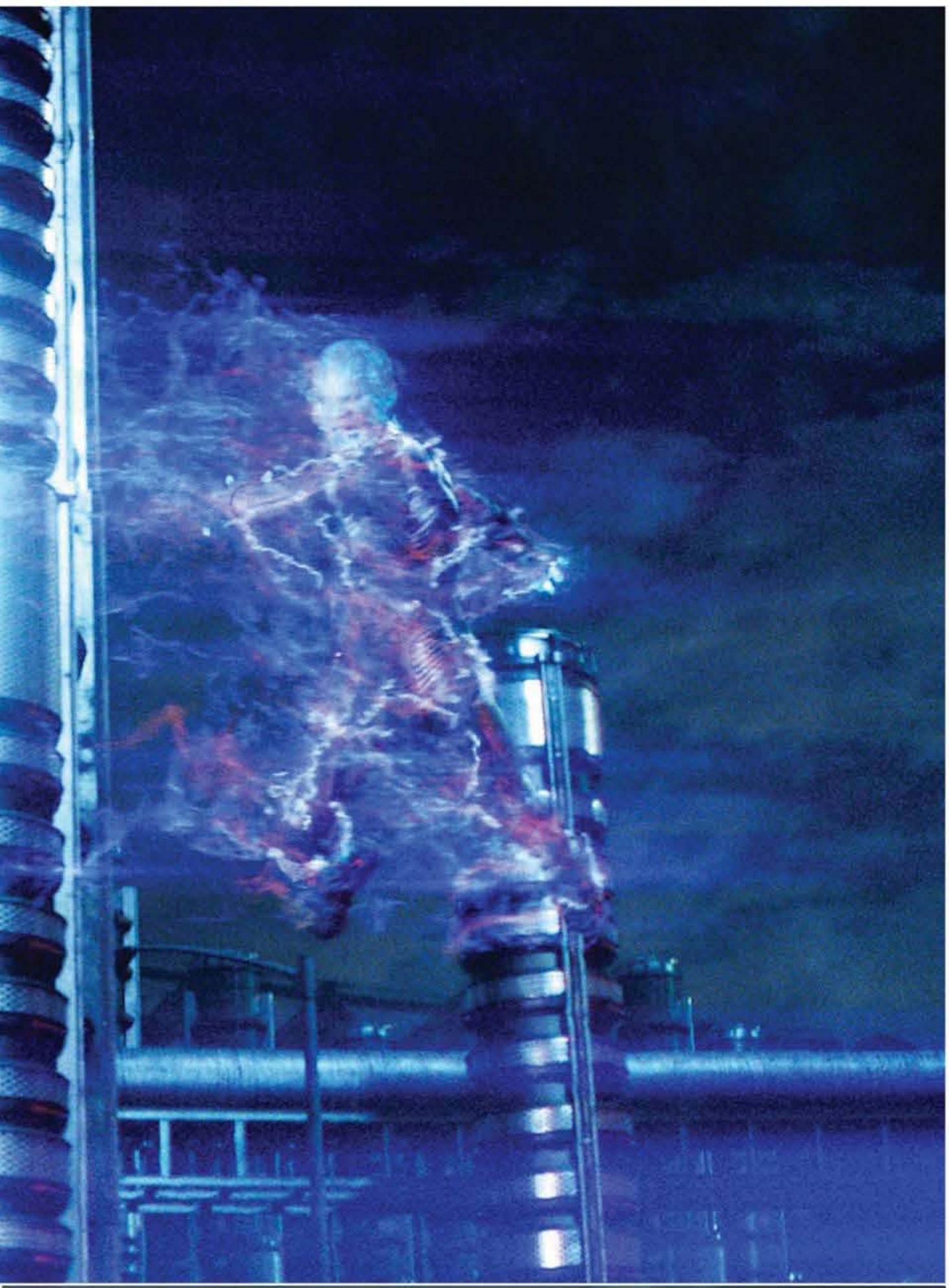
"That photo killed me," Webb told *EW* in 2012. "And with it Andrew wrote a very moving email about why Spider-Man had such an impact on him. He'd felt bullied as a kid, and Spider-Man allowed him to work out those issues in his imagination. You almost get the sense that playing this part was his destiny." Garfield agreed. "I honestly still can't wrap my head around the fact that I'm playing this character that's meant so much to me over the years," he told *EW* in 2012.

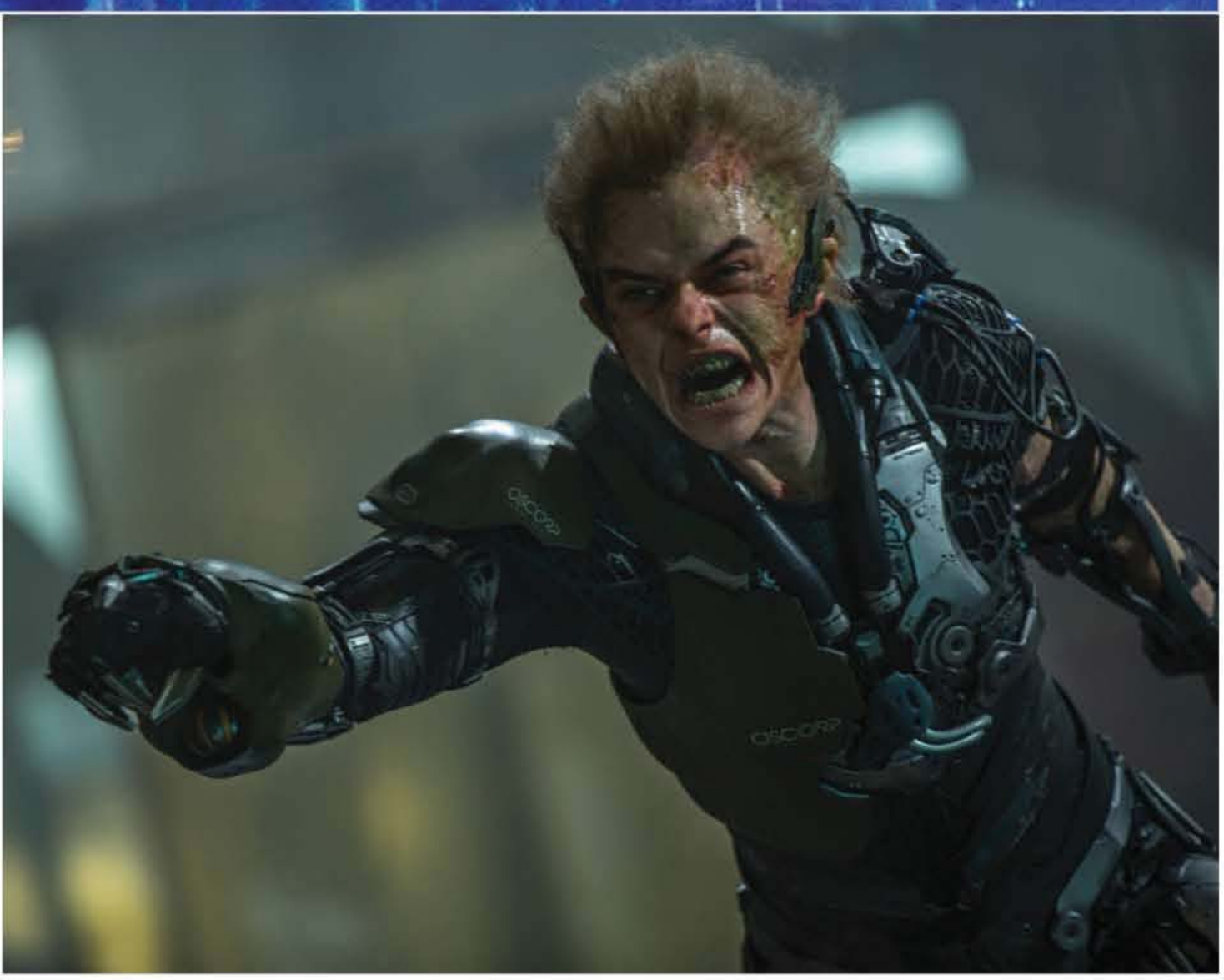
With a screenplay by James Vanderbilt, Alvin Sargent and Steve Kloves, *The Amazing Spider-Man* hit many of the same beats as Raimi's original—the deaths of Peter's parents and beloved uncle Ben (Martin Sheen); his close relationship with Aunt May (Sally Field); the infamous nibble from a radioactive spider—with a few exceptions. For one, the villain this time was Dr. Curt Connors's reptilian alter ego, the Lizard (Rhys Ifans). Second, Peter's love interest was not Mary Jane Watson but rather smarty-pants Gwen Stacy, his first love in the comic-book series, played by 23-year-old *Easy A* star Emma Stone. (She and Garfield would become an offscreen item too.)

When the film hit theaters on July 3, 2012, some criticized the repetitive nature of the origin story but praised Garfield's and Stone's performances and off-the-charts chemistry. *EW* critic Lisa Schwarzbaum called Webb's retelling "a friskier, sweeter-natured variation on the story Sam Raimi told in his recent trilogy, with greater emphasis on human relations than on special effects."

Thanks to a $758 million worldwide box office tally, a sequel was soon in the offing. Production began on *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*







↖ **Clockwise from top** Spider-Man battles a transformed Electro (Jamie Foxx); Dane DeHaan's Green Goblin suits up; Gwen and Peter; Max Dillon before his transformation into Electro.

in early 2013, with the cast and crew exuding a level of confidence they hadn't had on the first film. "You can feel it on the set," Webb told *EW* in 2013. "People aren't scared." Webb felt newly liberated with Peter's origin story out of the way. "That was kind of brutal because people were so familiar with it," he said.

Writers Alex Kurtzman, Roberto Orci, Jeff Pinkner and James Vanderbilt introduced a new rogues gallery: Jamie Foxx as Max Dillon/Electro; Dane DeHaan as Harry Osborn/the Green Goblin; and Paul Giamatti as Aleksei Sytsevich/the Rhino. Their ambition, coupled with the decision to end on a despairing note with (seven-year-old spoiler alert) Gwen's death, might have gotten the better of them. "The busy finale—or rather, finales—keeps coming until you want to blow a whistle and call it a draw," wrote *EW*'s Chris Nashawaty. Audiences were less keen, and the film earned less than its predecessor but still brought in a respectable $709 million.

In the sequel's lead-up, the studio had announced big plans for the *Amazing Spider-Man* franchise, including third and fourth installments, plus spinoffs featuring Venom and a bad guy team-up devoted to the villains collectively known in Spidey lore as the Sinister Six. But the comic-book movie gods had other ideas in mind.

Once Sony Pictures (Columbia's parent company) and Disney (Marvel's parent company) agreed to a deal in which the webslinger would become part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, starting with 2016's *Captain America: Civil War*, Garfield's run as Spidey was over. There was a new Brit-in-waiting who would pick up Peter's web-shooters and save the day.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY CHRIS NASHAWATY AND SARA VILKOMERSON

A PECK OF PETER PARKERS

# Giving Voice to Spider-Man

For a hero with no mouth, Spidey has had a slew of actors speaking (and sometimes singing) for him.

**BY MISSY SCHWARTZ**

**TOBEY MAGUIRE, ANDREW GARFIELD, TOM HOLLAND—WHEN IT COMES TO** actors who have memorably portrayed Peter Parker, the three movie stars might rank at the top of the list, but it's a very, very long list. Every time Spider-Man swings through a TV series, across the screen of a videogame or even a Broadway stage, there's an actor to bring him to life. Here, the notable, if lesser-known, performers to take on the dual role.

## 1. Paul Soles

***SPIDER-MAN* (ABC, 1967-70)**

The first to voice the kid from Queens was a guy from Toronto. Also known for playing Hermey the misfit elf in 1964's animated classic *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,* Soles popped up as Stanley the pizza man in 2008's live-action *Hulk* reboot—a nod to his work as Bruce Banner in 1966's *The Marvel Super Heroes* series.

## 2. Nicholas Hammond

***THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN* (CBS, 1977-79)**

Before incarnating the OG live-action Parker, the Aussie American actor played Friedrich von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* and the hunk who's turned off by Marcia's swollen nose in the famous *Brady Bunch* episode. Pop culture junkie Quentin Tarantino cast him as actor-director Sam Wanamaker in 2019's *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood.*

## 3. Ted Schwartz

***SPIDER-MAN* (SYNDICATION, 1981-82)**

Though the second animated Spidey series hasn't attained the same cult status of the '67 version, Schwartz followed it up with roles in two seminal 1980s cartoon franchises: the heroic Autobot Rodimus Prime in *Transformers* and *G.I. Joe*'s villainous Thrasher.

## 4. Dan Gilvezan

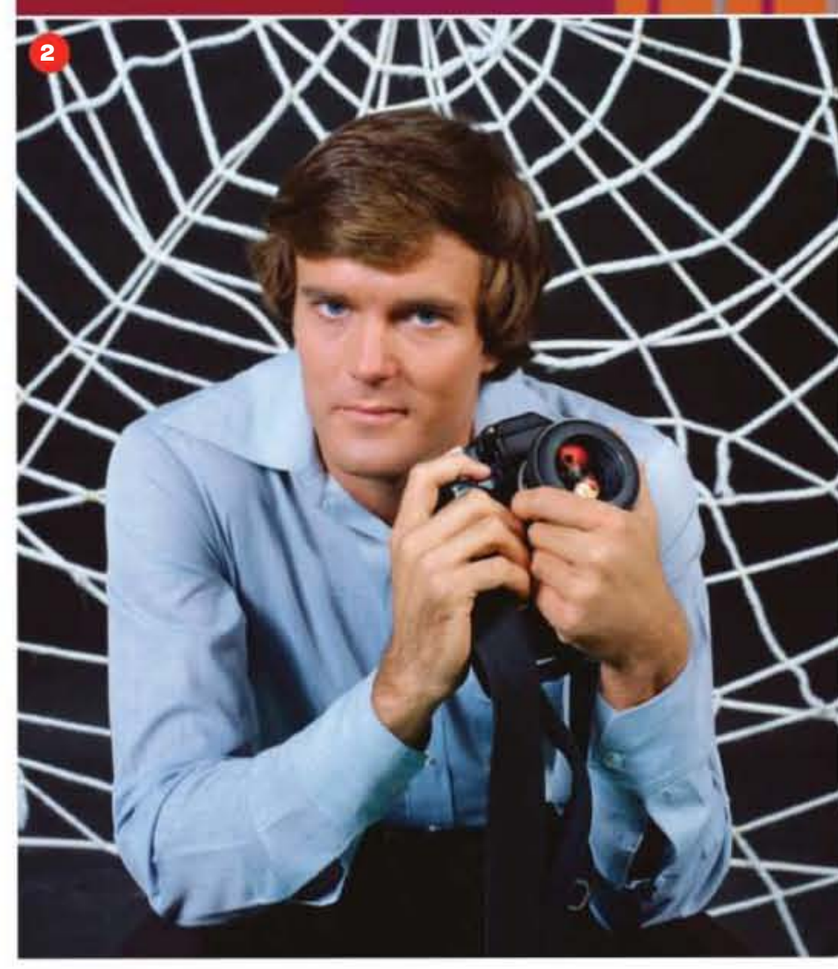
***SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS* (NBC, 1981-83)**

After playing the webslinger on this animated series from the same team as 1981's *Spider-Man,* Gilvezan, like Schwartz, joined the mid-'80s universes of *Transformers* (as Bumblebee) and *G.I. Joe* (as Slip Stream). He's also voiced characters in two Parker-related videogames.

## 5. Christopher Daniel Barnes

***SPIDER-MAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES* (FOX KIDS, 1994-98 )**

The lead of the popular '90s TV adaptation also wooed Ariel as Prince Eric in 1989's *The Little Mermaid* and, exiting the recording booth, played Greg Brady in



**↗ Clockwise from top** Spidey swings into action accompanied by a brand-new theme song; the 1994 animated series; the X-Men help out their *Amazing* friend; Nicholas Hammond poses as Pete.

4

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both mid-'90s live-action *Brady Bunch* parody movies (another Spidey-Brady connection!). He's voiced characters on the recent *Ultimate Spider-Man* TV show and in eight Spidey videogames.

## 6. Patrick Chilvers

***MARVEL SUPER HEROES* (1995)**

The voice of one of the earliest videogames featuring the Amazing One as a playable character, Chilvers did three subsequent games as Spidey, ending with 2000's Marvel vs. Capcom 2: New Age of Heroes.

## 7. Rino Romano

***SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED***
**(FOX KIDS, 1999-2001)**

Romano has dabbled in both Marvel and DC, voicing Spidey on TV and in videogames and Bruce Wayne on the WB's mid-aughts *The Batman.* Most recently he narrated the cartoon series *Curious George.*

## 8. Neil Patrick Harris

***SPIDER-MAN: THE NEW ANIMATED SERIES***
**(MTV, 2003)**

Perhaps you've heard of this Emmy- and Tony-winning actor who, a decade after *Doogie Howser, M.D.,* ended and two years before *How I Met Your Mother* began, anchored MTV's short-lived CGI spin on Peter Parker, as well as the 2010 videogame Spider-Man Shattered Dimensions?

## 9. James Arnold Taylor

**VARIOUS MARVEL VIDEOGAMES (2004-19)**

The nerd cred is strong with this one. Beyond copious Spidey videogame portrayals (of late in 2013's LEGO Marvel Super Heroes), on TV he was Triton on *Ultimate Spider-Man,* Harry Osborn on *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and Obi-wan Kenobi on the long-running *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* series and videogames.

## 10. Josh Keaton

***THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN***
**(THE CW, DISNEY XD, 2008-09)**

A fan favorite, Keaton has voiced myriad Marvel characters in videogames and on TV (this year, as Captain America on *What If...?*). On the DC Comics side, he played the title hero of *Green Lantern: The Animated Series.* Gamers currently know him as Anduin Wrynn in World of Warcraft.

## 11. Reeve Carney

***SPIDER-MAN: TURN OFF THE DARK***
**(BROADWAY MUSICAL, 2010-13)**

The actor-musician survived Julie Taymor's notoriously troubled stage musical unscathed, turning up as Taylor Swift's bad-boy boyfriend in her "I Knew You Were Trouble" video in 2012 and Dorian Gray on Showtime's *Penny Dreadful,* which ended in 2016. He appears as Tom Ford in Ridley Scott's upcoming *House of Gucci,* starring Adam Driver and Lady Gaga.

## 12. Drake Bell

***ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN***
**(DISNEY XD, 2012-17)**

A former Nickelodeon star, Bell voiced Spider-Man on several recent TV series in addition to *Ultimate,* and in three videogames. In 2021 he was sentenced to two years' probation for attempting child endangerment and disseminating matter harmful to juveniles, in a matter involving an underage fan.

## 13. Cole Howard

***MARVEL SUPER HERO ADVENTURES***
**(DISNEY CHANNEL, 2017-19)**

Before the 2017 miniseries, Howard's webslinger debuted in a fellow miniseries, *Marvel Video Comics,* in which he teamed up with Iron Man. He has voiced characters in several Japanese anime series and has a recurring role on the Cartoon Network's ongoing *Ninjago* show.

**→ Clockwise from top left** The 1999 animated show; the PlayStation 4 game Marvel's Spider-Man; Spidey becomes (more) adorable on Disney Junior; *Into the Spider-Verse*; Broadway star Reeve Carney catches a kiss.

## 14. Robbie Daymond

***SPIDER-MAN* (DISNEY XD, 2017-20)**

Overlapping with Howard but in different franchises, Daymond first voiced Peter Parker on the 2014 series *Marvel Disk Wars: The Avengers* before starring in his own Spider-Man spinoff. His superhero has appeared on TV's

15

16

17

*Avengers Assemble, Marvel Future Avengers* and *Guardians of the Galaxy,* as well as in four videogames.

## 15. Yuri Lowenthal

**VARIOUS MARVEL VIDEOGAMES (2008-PRESENT)**

This second fan favorite, who has incarnated the character a dozen times, is a dominant force in videogame Spideys—and is the rare voice actor to do his own motion-capture performance. He's been the titular hero of the Prince of Persia game since 2003 and is active in anime voice work.

## 16. Chris Pine, Jake Johnson, Jorma Taccone

***SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE* (SONY PICTURES, 2018)**

Okay, people, one last time: Pine played the idealistic gung-ho Webbed One, while Johnson played the jaded 40-something version, and Taccone (the Lonely Island actor/writer-director of such comedies as *MacGruber*) cameoed in the post-credit sequence as a 1967 Spidey arguing with Oscar Isaac's Spider-Man 2099 in a riff on the well-known meme.

## 17. Benjamin Valic

***SPIDEY AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS* (DISNEY JUNIOR, 2021-PRESENT)**

The teenage actor delivered Baby Sonic's lines in last year's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and now leads the charge of young'uns in the new kiddie cartoon series that has been renewed for a second season.

PART TWO

# INTO THE M

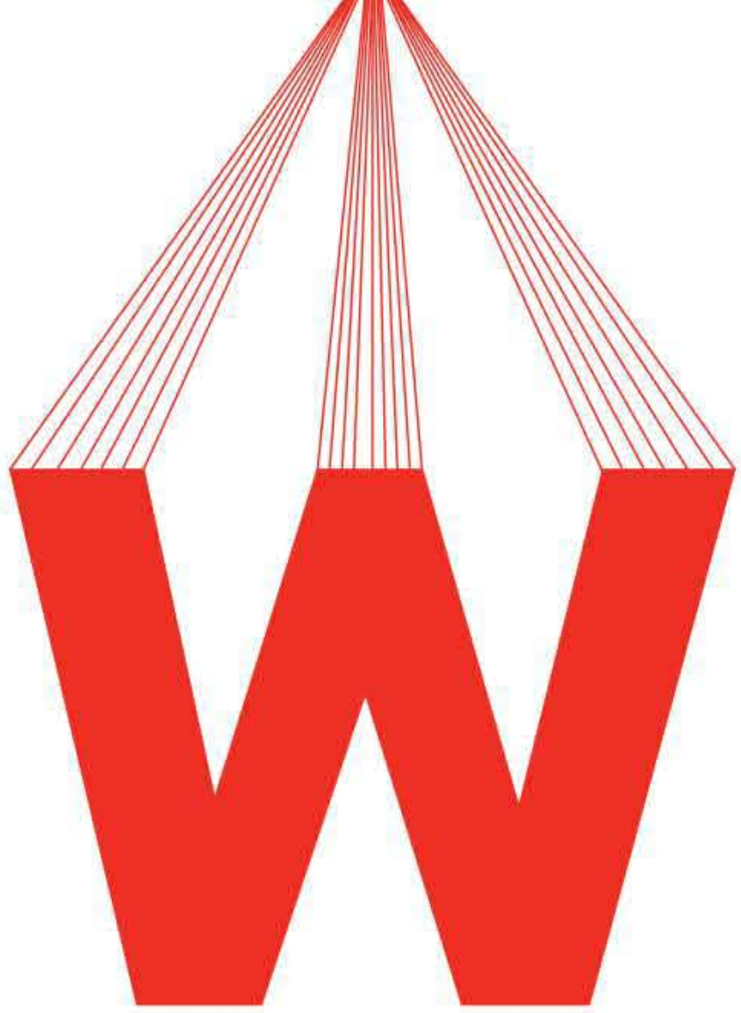
# ULTIVERSE

# WINNING BY A MILES

Gamely introducing Afro-Latino teen **MILES MORALES** to movie-goers, the animated sensation *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* reinvigorated the comic-book movie—and won an Oscar in the process.

**BY MISSY SCHWARTZ**

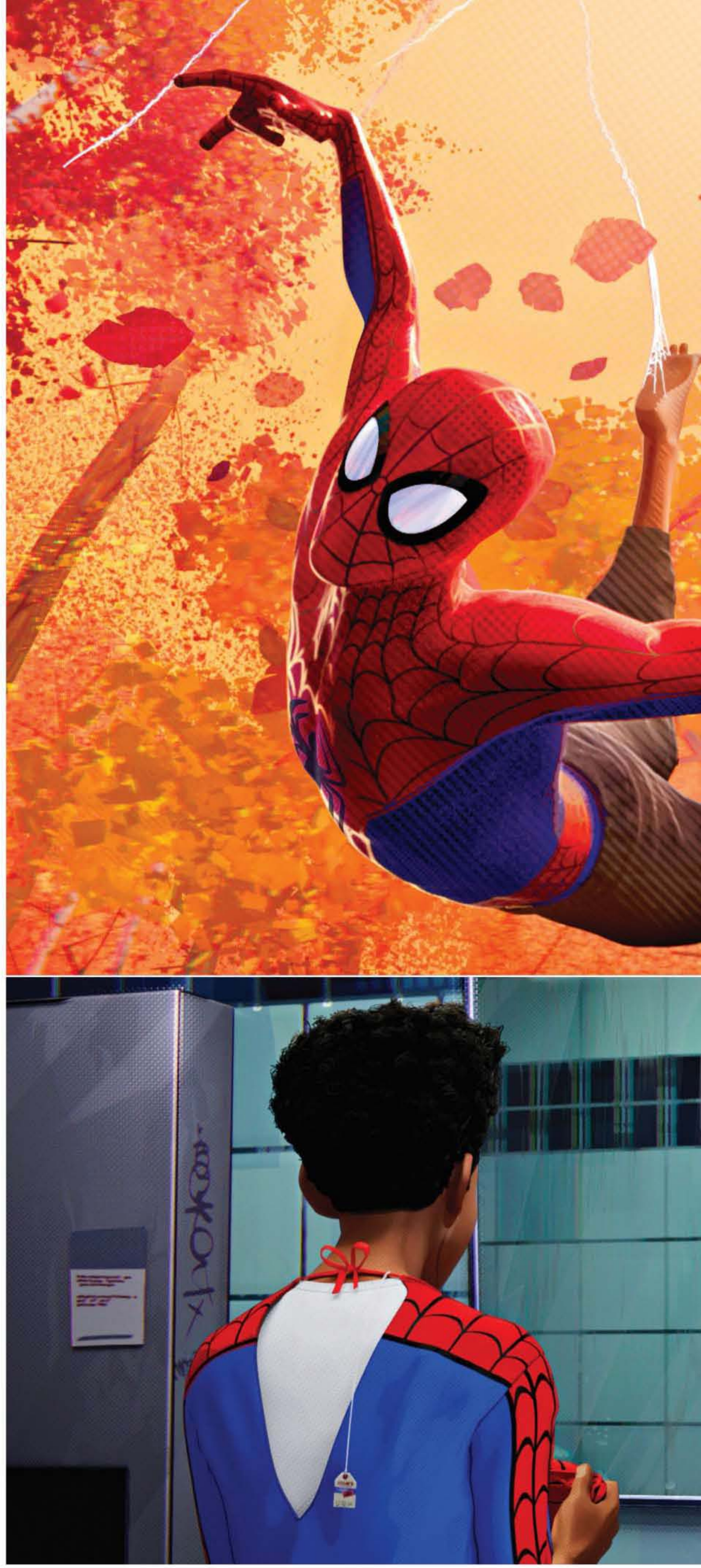
Miles Morales,
voiced by actor
Shameik Moore.



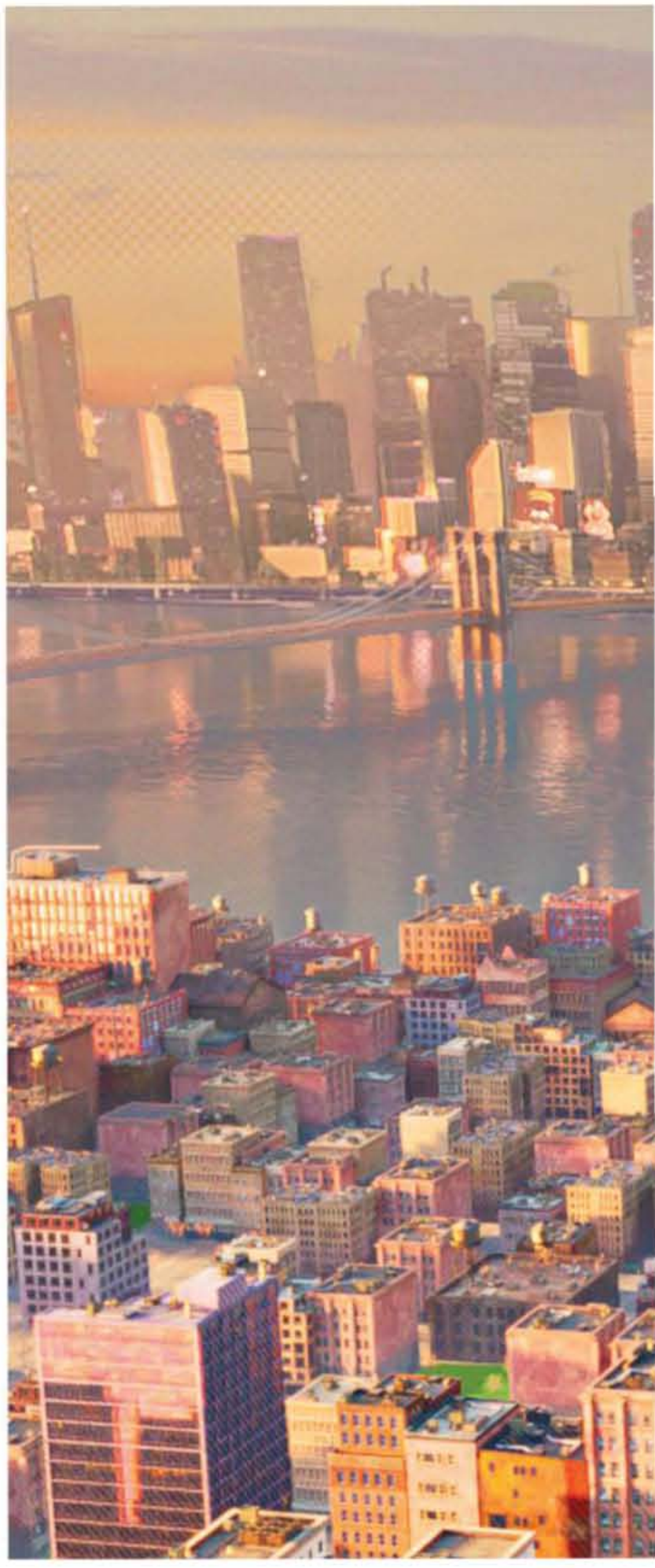
**WHEN SONY ANNOUNCED IN 2015** that it was developing an animated Spider-Man movie, the news was met with excitement . . . and confusion. Over the past two decades, the webslinger's saga had been adapted into two blockbuster live-action franchises led by two different actors, soon to be followed by a third. Was this really the moment to introduce another spin on Peter Parker?

Ah, but that was just it—this wasn't another retelling of the adventures of the teen from Queens. This was the big-screen debut of Miles Morales, the Afro-Latino middle schooler from Brooklyn who was created in 2011 by Marvel comics writer Brian Michael Bendis and artist Sara Pichelli. Bringing the first Spider-Man of color to cinematic life was a main draw for producing team Christopher Miller and Phil Lord (of LEGO Movie franchise fame), as was the opportunity to push the boundaries of the superhero movie as far as possible. "We just set out to make the most different Spider-Man movie we could," Lord said in 2018. Laughing, Miller added, "We didn't tell [Sony] how bold of a take until it was too late to change it."

It's that audacious DNA that made *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* so groundbreaking—for Marvel, for animation, for filmmaking itself. Visually the movie looks like no other. By combining slick 3D and painterly 2D animation, *Spider-Verse* pulsates with color and



↗ **Clockwise from top** Peter B. Parker, as Spider-Man (Jake Johnson), teaches Miles the ropes; Aunt May, Spider-Gwen and Peter on a mission with Miles; Miles ponders his fate.



↗ **From top** Miles takes a leap of faith; a trio of heroes—(from left) Miles's Spider-man, Peter B. Parker's Spider-Man and Spider-Gwen—prepare to face down Kingpin.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY DEVAN COGGAN AND NICK ROMANO

# THE SPIDER-

**From left:** John Mulaney (Spider-Ham), Liev Schreiber (as villain Kingpin), Jake Johnson (Peter B. Parker), Shameik Moore (Miles Morales), Hailee Steinfeld (Spider-Gwen), Nicolas Cage (Spider-Man Noir) and Kimiko Glenn (Peni Parker).

# FAMILY

Six Spideys are better than one! Meet the interdimensional heroes who save the world from certain doom in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.

**Miles Morales**
SHAMEIK MOORE

An Afro-Latino teenager from Brooklyn, Miles is juggling his new powers while being an ordinary 14-year-old. "With great power does come great responsibility, and I think Miles takes that on from a whole different angle," Moore says. Brian Michael Bendis and Sara Pichelli created the character for Marvel Comics in 2011, but *Spider-Verse* marks his big-screen debut. His ethnic identity is a key to the story. "If there's a kid in Brooklyn who's half Puerto Rican and half African American with curly hair living in Flatbush or somewhere, [it's] very relatable," Moore says.

**Peter B. Parker**
JAKE JOHNSON

Screenwriters Phil Lord and Rodney Rothman's animated adventure sees Miles team up with Spideys from different universes—including a version of the original Peter Parker, played by Johnson, to stop an interdimensional threat. "He's got all of these Spider-People who are trying to give him advice and Mr. Miyagi him," producer Christopher Miller says. Adds Johnson of Peter and Miles's relationship: "They see something special in each other that they don't necessarily see in themselves. They don't necessarily want to need each other, but then in the end, they kind of need each other."

## Gwen Stacy
**HAILEE STEINFELD**

Academy Award-nominated actor (*True Grit*) and pop star Steinfeld won the honor of voicing the first big-screen female version of the friendly neighborhood superhero. In her dimension she was bitten by that radioactive spider, not Peter. Sporting a striking black-and-white hooded ensemble—so chic—she's got the same powers and balletic moves as traditional Spidey, Steinfeld says. The role was "so much fun to play around with," the actress tells *EW.* "She kicks into gear, and that natural leader kicks in, and then she's Spider-Gwen."

## Spider-Man Noir
**NICOLAS CAGE**

He's been called one of the "edgiest" incarnations of Spider-Man, so naturally, the famously edgy Cage was an ideal fit for the role. Spider-Man Noir hails from 1933; rendered in black and white, he cuts an intimidating figure as a hard-boiled private eye. Cage found inspiration in classic literature from the 1930s and '40s, including the works of Raymond Chandler. He easily mastered the distinctive slang so associated with the detective genre, though we're fairly confident none of Chandler's characters ever called anyone a "hard-boiled turtle slapper."

## Peni Parker
**KIMIKO GLENN**

"My name is Peni Parker.... I was bitten by a radioactive spider. I'm from New York in the year 3145. I have a psychic link with a spider who lives inside my father's robot. And we're best friends. Forever." Makes sense. One of the newest interpretations of the Spider-Man character, Peni was co-created by writer Gerard Way and artist Jake Wyatt for 2014's Edge of Spider-Verse comic book event. In her anime-inspired world, she fights villains and monsters, hoping to protect Aunt May and Uncle Ben and honor her late father's memory.

## Spider-Ham
**JOHN MULANEY**

The award for most surprising Spider-Man goes to none other than Peter Porker, the anthropomorphic pig Spider-Ham, voiced by comedian and *Saturday Night Live* veteran John Mulaney. He might only have a few minutes of screen time, but the little hero—who holds down a day job as a photographer for the newspaper the *Daily Beagle*—makes a big impression. "When they said, 'You need to play a fast-talking pig who's a news reporter from the '40s,' I said, 'I've got this,'" Mulaney said during an appearance on the talk show *Conan*.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY DEVAN COGGAN AND ANTHONY BREZNICAN

# THE BIG BADS

Over the years Spider-Man has fought a rotating lineup of sinister (and sometimes sympathetic) foes. From shape-shifting aliens to mentors gone rogue, here are the most memorable, mysterious and electrifying big-screen bad guys to cross paths with the wily webslinger. **BY DOUGLAS WOLK**

## 13

## CARNAGE

***VENOM: LET THERE BE CARNAGE* (2021)**

Created by David Michelinie and Mark Bagley in 1992, Carnage is as X-Treme '90s as a 12-pack of Surge. A blood-red, fanged and tentacled alien monstrosity, he's symbiotically bonded with serial killer Cletus Kasady (played by Woody Harrelson in *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*) and motivated by nothing more complicated than an urge for mayhem. Carnage is often drawn as a nearly abstract splatter of red, with tendrils flying everywhere; his onscreen version is, by necessity, fleshier.

↑The Carnage symbiote embraces Woody Harrelson as the terrifying serial killer Cletus Kasady.

# 12

## RHINO

***THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2* (2014)**

From his 1966 debut in Spider-Man comics onward, the Rhino has been all earthbound force to Spidey's airborne bounciness: Aleksei Sytsevich, a proud, not-too-bright ex-thug whose costume gives him enormous strength and toughness but (often) can't be removed. Paul Giamatti's performance in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* plays the part for comedy, with a very broad Russian accent, and the movie version's design swaps out his leathery hide and so-dumb-it's-scary horned headwear for a mammoth mech suit.

↑ Paul Giamatti as Rhino.

↑ Tom Hardy's Eddie Brock Jr. and Venom.

# 11

## VENOM

***VENOM* (2018)**

Almost literally Spider-Man's shadow-self, Venom first appeared in comics when Peter Parker's cool new black costume turned out to be a bloodthirsty alien symbiote that was trying to bond with its host. Topher Grace played Venom in 2007's *Spider-Man 3,* but the 2018 *Venom* movie, with a stack of CGI software as the title character and Tom Hardy as its long-standing/long-suffering partner Eddie Brock Jr., was a surprise hit, its grimmer moments balanced by buddy-comedy tomfoolery.

# 10

## LIZARD

***THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN* (2012)**

After taking an experimental serum, the white-lab-coated Dr. Curt Connors does whatever a lizard can, including regenerating his lost arm and turning into a scaly monster that goes on homicidal rampages. Oops. In the comics the Lizard is one of many villains who double as disastrous science-mentor figures for Peter Parker; Dylan Baker played a human-only version of Connors in Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man 2* and *3,* but Rhys Ifans's Connors in 2012's *The Amazing Spider-Man* got to go full reptile.

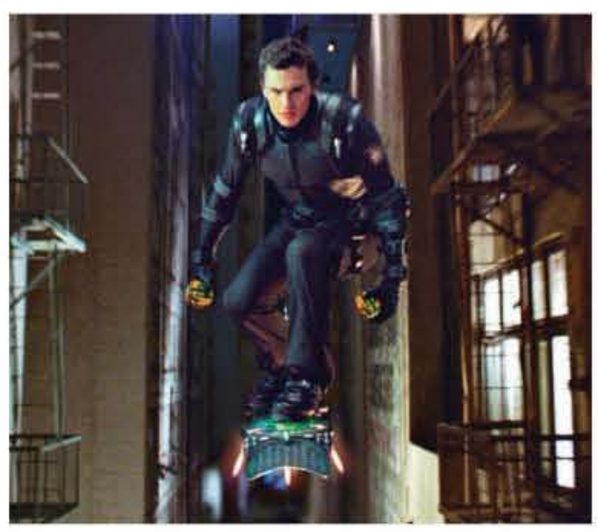
↑ Rhys Ifans's Lizard.

# 9

## THE NEW GOBLIN

***SPIDER-MAN 3* (2007) AND *THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2* (2014)**

In the comics, Peter Parker's friend Harry Osborn is the second Green Goblin. Blaming Spider-Man for the death of his father, the original Goblin, he succumbs to the same pattern of insanity, villainy and death. In Sam Raimi's trilogy, James Franco's Harry appears in all three films, and just a few years later Dane DeHaan is recast in the role and becomes the central antagonist of director Marc Webb's second film. But just like in the comics, neither actor's Harry can compare to Norman Osborn's undiluted menace.



↑James Franco as the Green Goblin.

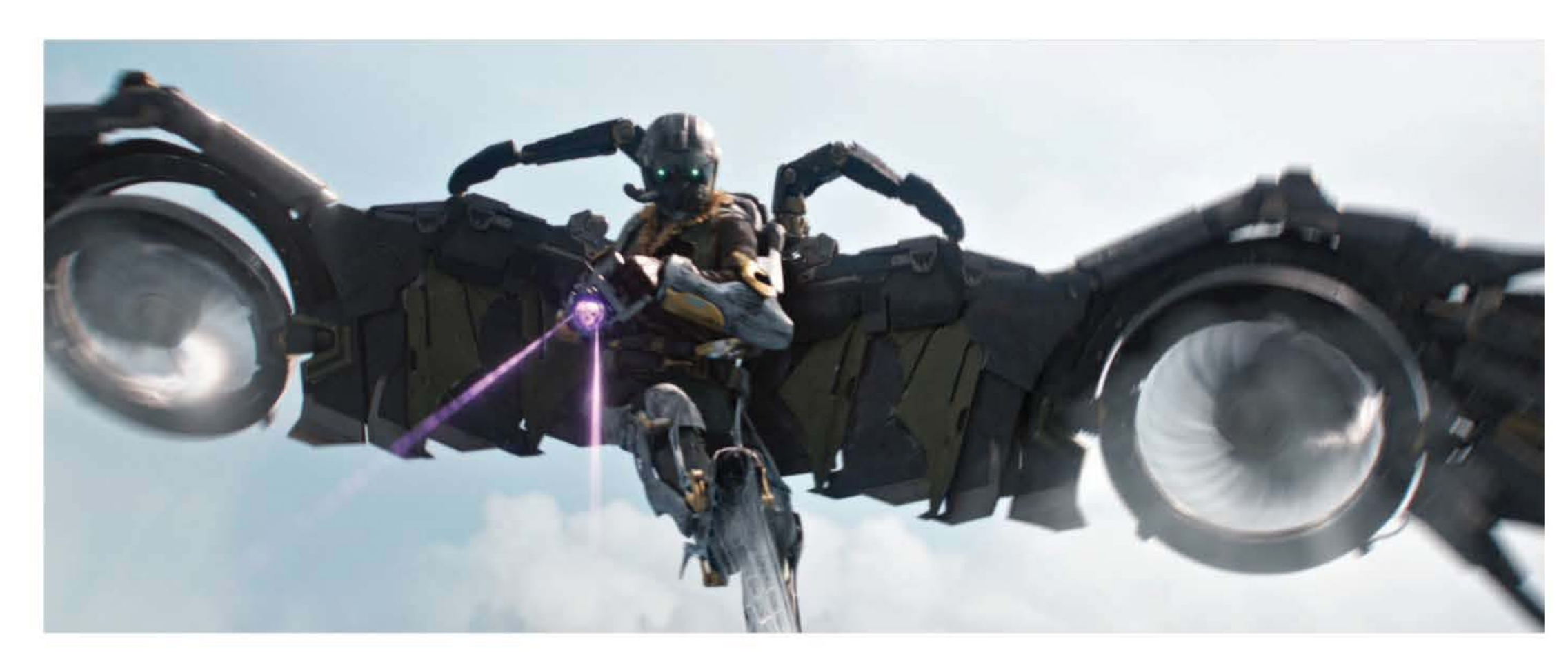
↑ Jamie Foxx's Electro.

# 8

## ELECTRO

***THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2* (2014)**

Max Dillon, in 2014's *The Amazing Spider-Man 2,* is the ultimate disgruntled fanboy: a lonely Spider-Man acolyte who gains electrical powers, then violently turns against his idol when he doesn't get the respect he craves. Jamie Foxx's crackling blue Electro is a major improvement on the 1964 comics design (a goofy green-and-yellow thing with a lightning-bolt-shaped mask). Foxx is rumored to be reprising the role in *Spider-Man: No Way Home,* although perhaps not as blue this time.



# 7
## VULTURE
***SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING* (2017)**

Spider-Man's earliest costumed villain—they originally fought in *The Amazing Spider-Man #2*, back in 1963—the Adrian Toomes of the comics is an elderly career criminal, but what he shares with Peter Parker is a genius for inventing gadgets. Michael Keaton came to the role in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* with, let's say, extensive experience in superhero movies, and the film stripped the Vulture down to his essential components: his greed, his wings and his weary cynicism.

↑ From hero to antihero: Michael Keaton flies on new wings as Vulture.

↑ Thomas Haden Church's Sandman.

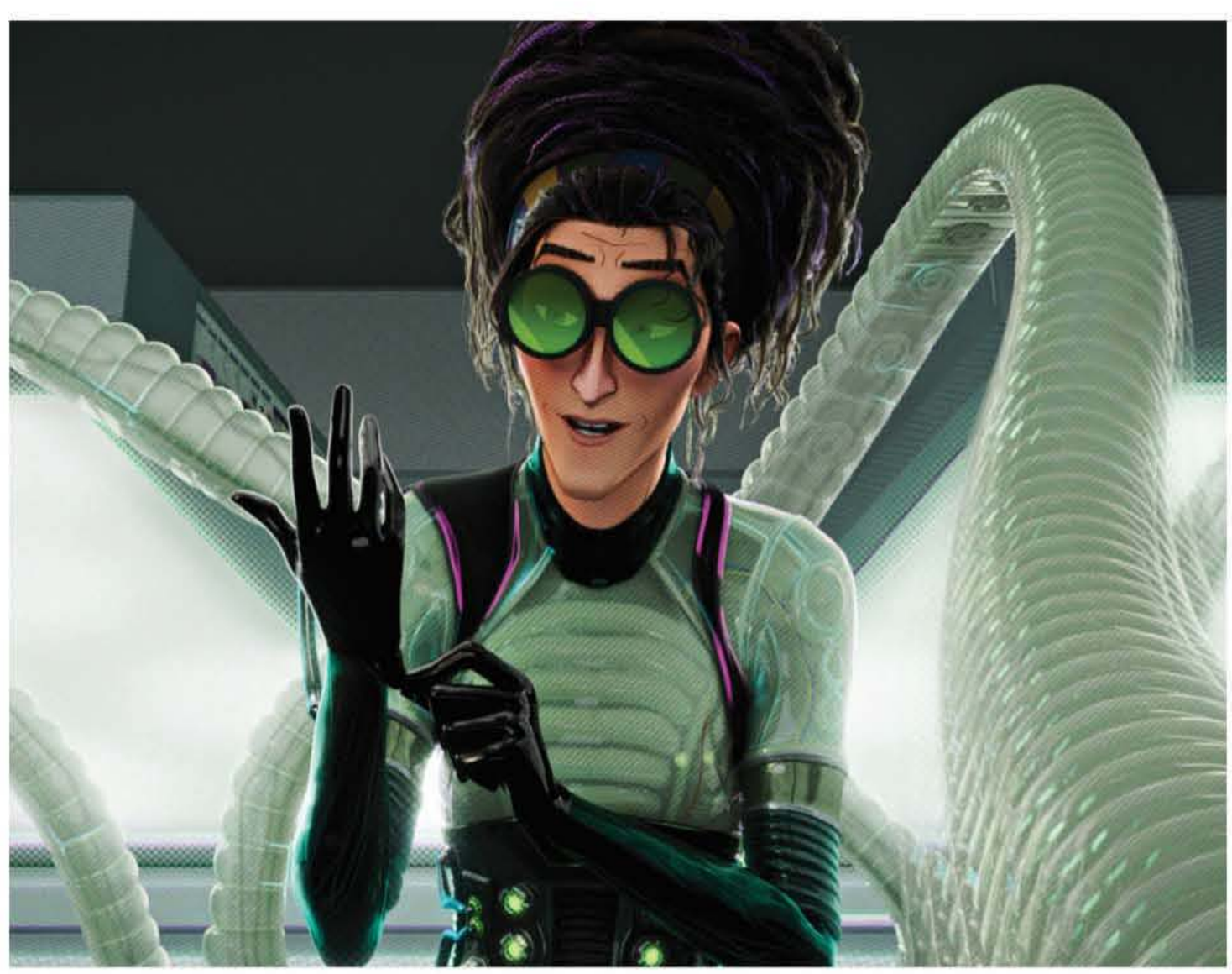
# 6
## SANDMAN
***SPIDER-MAN 3* (2007)**

The Sandman has had a long, peculiar comics career: He was mostly a Fantastic Four adversary in the '60s and '70s, then became a superhero in the '90s, even joining the Avengers briefly, before returning to his original role as a Spidey villain. Thomas Haden Church's *Spider-Man 3* turn as Flint Marko captures the character's uncanny slipperiness—a beefy brawler who can instantly take any form or become a formless storm of particles.

# 5
## MYSTERIO
***SPIDER-MAN: FAR FROM HOME* (2019)**

He originally had the silliest design of any early Spider-Man adversary, with a fishbowl-like glass dome covering his head, but illusionist Quentin Beck—in the comics a Hollywood special-effects whiz turned villain—wields a power that's more subtle than it seems: He doesn't just create spooky visions, he messes with everyone's ability to tell what's real and what's not. Jake Gyllenhaal's Mysterio in *Far From Home* is a master manipulator whose ultimate trick is pulling away Peter Parker's disguise.

↑ Jake Gyllenhaal's Mysterio.



↑ Doctor "Liv" Octavius, voiced by Kathryn Hahn.

# 4
## DOCTOR OCTOPUS
***SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE* (2018)**

Doc Ock is usually seen as a man, but Olivia Octavius—*Into the Spider-Verse*'s version of the many-armed menace, hilariously voiced by Kathryn Hahn—was invented for the film by Hahn's friend Bob Persichetti. Rodney Rothman, who codirected it with Persichetti and Peter Ramsey, noted that "in earlier drafts she was a Big Lebowski-type dude." (Excellent detail: When she puts her hair up, it looks like an octopus head.) A different woman character, Carolyn Trainer, replaced the original Doctor Octopus for a few years' worth of comics in the '90s, but she's nothing like "Liv," as Aunt May calls her.

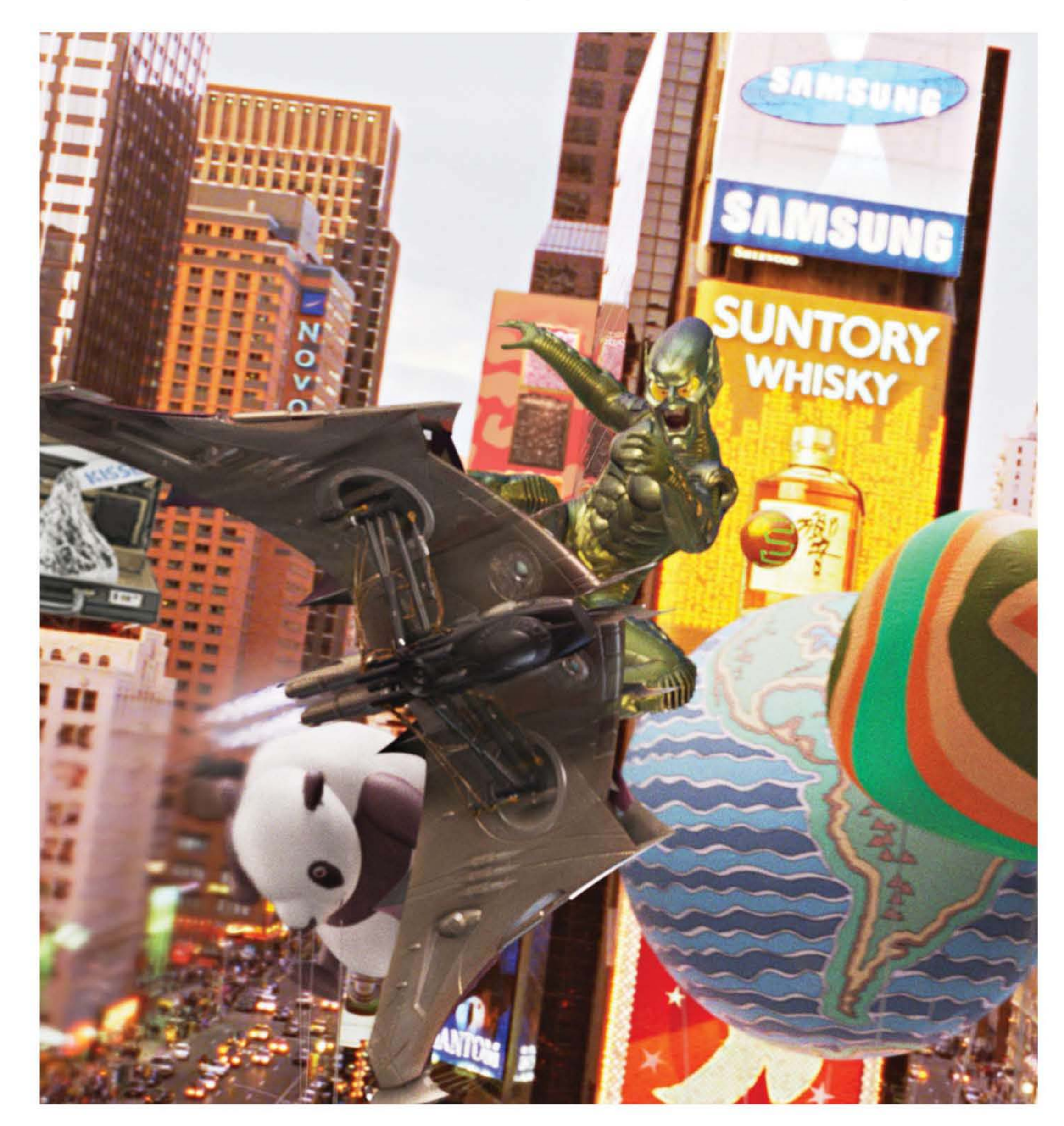
# 3

## THE GREEN GOBLIN

***SPIDER-MAN* (2002)**

Norman Osborn, the first and scariest Green Goblin of the comics, is the ultimate bad-father figure in a story full of absent and terrible fathers—a wealthy, successful scientist who is secretly a cackling sociopath and whose legacy to his son, Peter Parker's best friend, Harry, is madness and addiction. Willem Dafoe's performance as Osborn in Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* brings real dramatic gravity to what could have been a silly piece of scenery-chewing.

↓ Norman Osborn (Willem Dafoe) suits up and embraces his dark side.



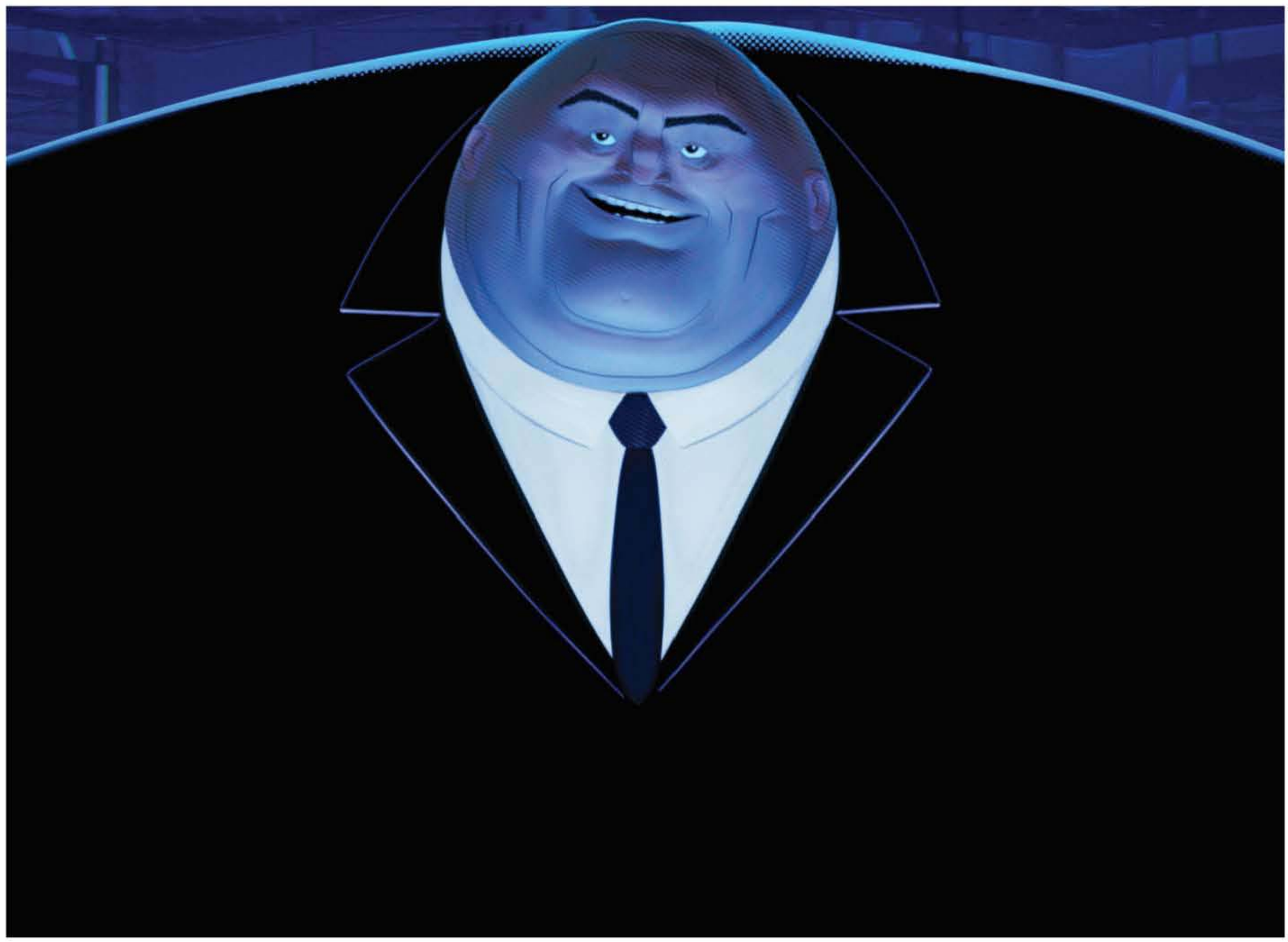
# 2

## KINGPIN

***SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE* (2018)**

Originally one of Spider-Man's comics nemeses in the late '60s, the mammoth and ruthless crime boss Wilson Fisk became more associated with Daredevil in the '80s. The version of the Kingpin who appears in *Spider-Verse,* voiced by Liev Schreiber (with a striking, bizarre design, based on the way Bill Sienkiewicz drew him in 1986's *Daredevil: Love and War*), is a tragic monster who will stop at nothing in his attempts to reunite the family he's lost.

↓ Liev Schreiber brings a mournful depth to the Kingpin's voice.



## The Final Member of the Sinister Six

WE'VE SEEN ALL BUT ONE MEMBER OF THIS ROTATING LINEUP OF COMIC-BOOK VILLAINS MAKE THE LEAP TO THE BIG SCREEN

Sergei Kravinoff, a big-game hunter who's decided that Spider-Man is the ultimate prey, is less a conventional supervillain than a pro-wrestling heel, with his fur cape and bare chest. Still, Kraven has repeatedly pushed Spidey to his limits—and he was also one of the original Sinister Six, led by Doctor Octopus, alongside Mysterio, the Vulture, Sandman and Electro. A Kraven the Hunter movie starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson is reportedly in the works for 2023.

↑ Aaron Taylor-Johnson

# 1 DOCTOR OCTOPUS

***SPIDER-MAN 2* (2004)**

Otto Octavius, whose mechanical arms echo the eight-legged spider design, is Spider-Man's greatest adversary: the bitter, brilliant creep that Peter Parker might have grown up to become if he hadn't had his life turned upside-down as a teenager, with an unshakable grudge against his bright young counterpart. (His schemes in comics have included speeding up global warming, nearly marrying Aunt May and taking over Peter Peter's body to prove that he's better at being Spider-Man.) Alfred Molina's definitive performance in *Spider-Man 2* nailed both Doc Ock's menace and his sourly awkward nerdiness; Molina's reappearance in the *No Way Home* trailer drew cheers.

↑ Alfred Molina's menacing turn as Doctor Octavius in 2004's *Spider-Man 2.*

THE FUTURE

# What Will Happen Next?

A rogues' gallery of Spider-Man foes is heading to the big screen, starting with 2022's *Morbius*. Plus! Miles Morales returns to the Spider-Verse. **BY AMY WILKINSON**

**SPIDEY'S WEB OF INFLUENCE** continues to expand well beyond the world of Peter Parker thanks to cinematic spinoffs centered on characters both friendly (Miles Morales in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*) and not so friendly (Carnage in the recently released *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*). But just how far into the future will those gossamer strands reach?

The short answer: pretty far, if everything goes as planned.

"Sony Pictures has a marvelous library of characters to play with," says Sanford Panitch, president of Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group. "It's about the greatest toy I could ever imagine getting to work on. We want to deliver for the fans as much as we possibly can."

To that end, following the December release of *Spider-Man: No Way Home,* the crime fighter will swing back into theaters next fall with *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse 2,* the sequel to the 2018 Oscar winner for Best Animated Feature. Not much is known about the plot of the October 2022 release, though back in 2018 producer Amy Pascal noted that the story would focus on the budding romance between Shameik Moore's Miles Morales and Hailee Steinfeld's Gwen Stacy. And it was announced earlier in 2021 that *Insecure* co-creator and star Issa Rae would join the cast as Jessica Drew, aka Spider-Woman. (And speaking of Spider-Woman, there has been speculation that Olivia Wilde is directing a movie about the heroine.)

← *Venom* crawled to the top of the box office in 2018 and did it again in 2021.

→ Jared Leto in the forthcoming film *Morbius,* expected in 2022.

Of course, along with the good guys come the baddies, and there's plenty of those from where Woody Harrelson's Carnage came. "There are some fascinatingly complex villains and antiheroes," says Panitch of the studio's Universe of Marvel Characters. "We take our time developing them in the dark and only bring them out into the light when we think they are ready."

Emerging from the shadows in January 2022 is *Morbius,* starring Jared Leto as the titular scientist, who in an attempt to cure himself of a rare disease instead inflicts himself with a form of vampirism. The film costars Matt Smith, Jared Harris and Tyrese Gibson and features the return of Michael Keaton's Adrian Toomes/Vulture from *Spider-Man: Homecoming.*

Another Spidey foe about to get his due in theatrical form is Kraven the Hunter, aka Sergei Kravinoff, a Russian immigrant who makes a new home for himself in the U.S. Aaron Taylor-Johnson has been tapped to play Kraven in the film due out January 2023.

And, of course, there is always the prospect of a third Venom film. Even before the sequel's release, star Tom Hardy told *Esquire U.K.* that a follow-up was on his mind. "I'm thinking about the third movie as well, because I think you need to write that at the same time," he said.

One big question remains: Will all these villains (plus those from *Spider-Man: No Way Home,* including Doc Ock, Electro and Green Goblin) join forces in a Sinister Six film? Something Sony has been trying to make happen since the Andrew Garfield Spider-Man days? That remains to be seen—for now. And when it comes to spinoffs, says Panitch, quality—not quantity—is paramount for Sony.

"To us, it's about doing it right, not just getting them made," he says.

**← Clockwise from top** Carnage unleashed; Eddie Brock (Tom Hardy) with ex-girlfriend Anne Weying (Michelle Williams); Naomie Harris's twisted villain Shriek, a long-time comics ally of Carnage.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SOME FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD

# Sound Bites

## "My fans expect a certain amount of quippage in every battle."

**TO DEADPOOL**

"Don't worry … if I know Hollywood, you'll get another chance. They'll keep rebooting the same idea over and over again until they get it right!"

*"MY WEAKNESS! IT'S SMALL KNIVES… ANYTHING BUT KNIVES!"*

"I make it a rule not to partner with anyone green. Or, you know, psychotic."

"Come on, Doc. You're a cephalopod, I'm an arthropod. Can't we just hug it out?"

**SPIDER-MAN**
Those wings carbon-fiber?

**FALCON**
Is this stuff coming out of you?

**SPIDER-MAN**
That would explain the rigidity-flexibility ratio, which, gotta say, that's awesome, man!

**FALCON**
I don't know if you've been in a fight before, but there's usually not this much talking.

**SPIDER-MAN**
All right. Sorry, my bad.

## "PIZZA TIME!"

ANYONE CAN WEAR THE MASK